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Cuisine

ISSUE 141 JULY 2010

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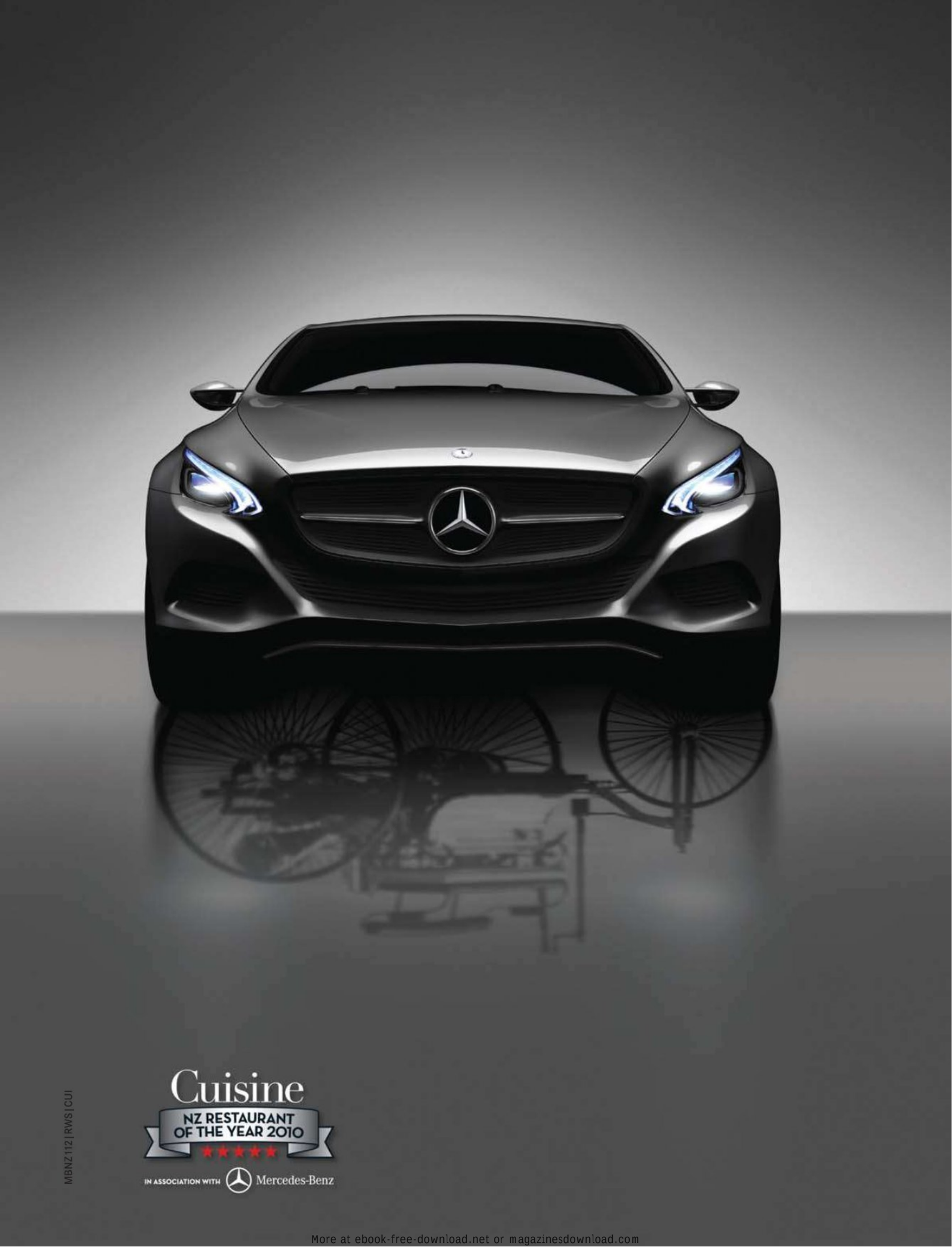

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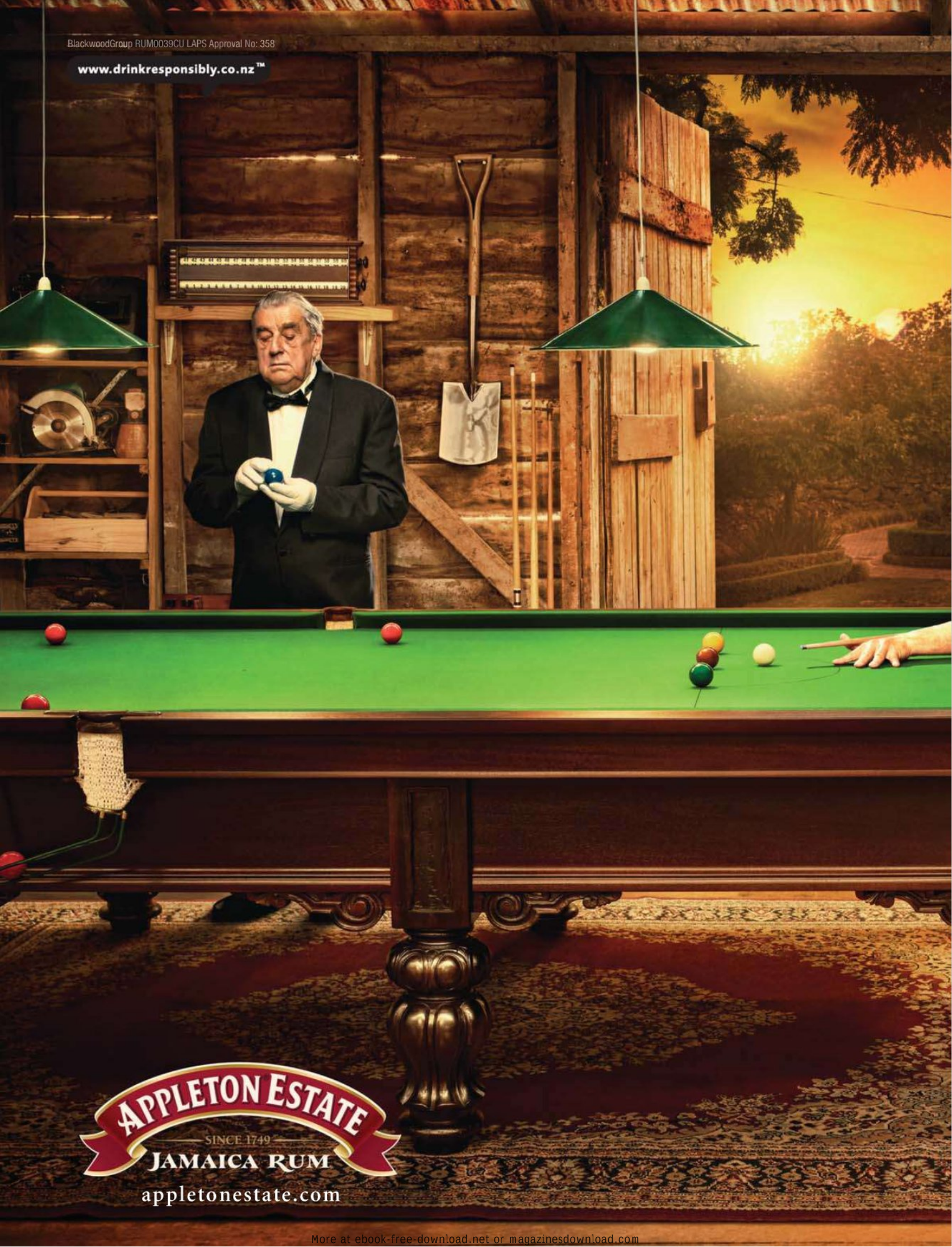

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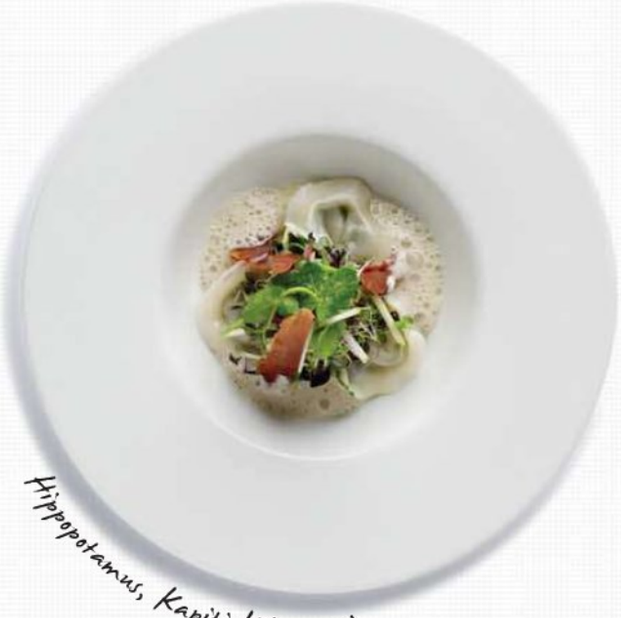

Hippopotamus, Kapiti Kikorangi

Plateau, Kapiti Kikorangi

The Lakes Restaurant @ Peppers Clearwater, Kapiti Mt Herbert

Two Fifteen, Kapiti Goat Feta

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À Deco, Kapiti Kotuku

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Two Chefs Bistro, Kapiti Chèvre de Bellay

Every Kapiti cheese is crafted from our land, our weather, our animals and by our hands to create a unique piece of New Zealand. To celebrate this, Kapiti invited chefs from all over the country to design a dish for the Kapiti Chef Collection inspired by a Kapiti cheese. Discover the Kapiti story and the delicious recipes at **www.kapiticollection.co.nz**

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When the buyer, Christopher Forbes, proudly displayed his delicious investment, the ancient cork shrank and fell into the bottle - turning the world's most expensive bottle of wine into the world's most expensive bottle of vinegar. Mr Forbes might not have been left with a nasty taste in his mouth had he sought guidance from the start.

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A disclosure statement is available on request and free of charge.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON McLEAN; AT AUCKLAND'S TABOU BAR & BISTRO, TABOU.CO.NZ; OVAL CRYSTAL LOOP NECKLACE FROM PEARL, PEARLCULTURE.CO.NZ

Our cover says it all – we're embracing the bright side of winter here at *Cuisine*. We're focusing on the things to love about this season: namely, the delicious things.

Of course, it's an excuse to eat heartier food. Big helpings of it. I will be leaving pots to slowly bubble away – perhaps with meltingly soft beef cheeks in red wine and herbs, or tender lamb shanks with warming spices, filling the house with welcoming aromas. It also gives me the perfect excuse to eschew a dainty side salad in favour of a big dish of cheesy kumara gratin or a generous serve of buttery sage mash. And we all know that pudding does wonders for your being in cold weather – perhaps a golden-topped crumble of tangy rhubarb or an old-fashioned apple pie with loads of whipped cream. As Al Brown points out, there's a certain satisfaction you get from these traditional homemade desserts that you don't get from intricate, highly composed restaurant creations. It's just a different experience.

Then there's the sunshine lemons bring to the colder months. Growing up with a tree laden with lemons in the backyard, I took them for granted and almost regarded it as an affront when I actually had to *buy* them when I lived in inner-city apartments. Like many of you, I use them nearly every day. The fine streams of zest in a sprinkle of gremolata lift rich slow-cooked meat; strips of peel can elevate a casserole to greatness and a squeeze of juice makes, well, just about anything come to life. And there's the joy a perfectly made lemon tart brings to the table. Fiona Smith gives us the delicious recipe for our cover version and makes citrus the star in dishes such as a fragrant fish soup, Bolognese and a chocolate cake.

I hope our food adds a bit of sunshine to your home this winter.

Sarah

Sarah Nicholson

PS: For your chance to win the ultimate food-lover's getaway to the Sydney International Food Festival, see page 28.

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Le Cordon Bleu World Food Media Awards for *Cuisine Wine Country* 2009

Winner, Best Food Magazine, 2007
Le Cordon Bleu World Food Media Awards

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people in the issue

JOHN BELSHAM

A career in winemaking was not what the young John Belsham had envisioned. That all changed in 1977. He was travelling, he'd just run out of money and he happened to be in Bordeaux at vintage time. Taking a job at a small winery in the Médoc, the die was cast. His aptitude and fascination saw him spend the next five years as understudy to a perfectionist, who taught him the art and science of winemaking, and a distinguished wine career was launched. One of New Zealand's most experienced and respected international wine judges, Belsham is also winemaker-owner of Foxes Island Wines in Marlborough and *Cuisine*'s wine panel chair. In this issue's New Zealand Syrah tasting, he describes our top wine as "one of the best Syrahs I've ever tasted in this country". For more see page 128.

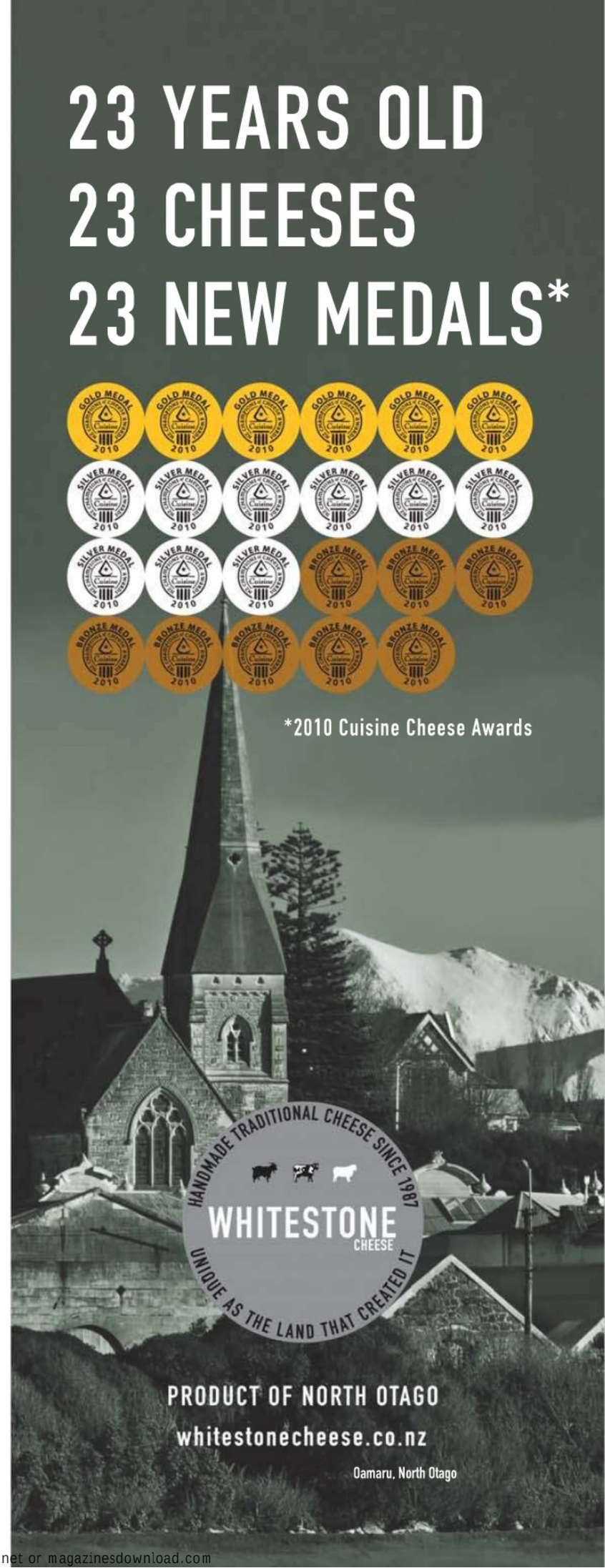
JANE CLIFTON

Jane Clifton is the political columnist for the *New Zealand Listener*, having worked in the Parliamentary Press Gallery since 1985, including for newspapers and television, and written a book, *Political Animals*. When not humouring or baiting politicians, she spends time gardening, doing needlework, and exercising and entertaining her three dogs, the youngest of whom has just taught himself to open the fridge, though sadly not to close it. Neither he nor Clifton is much of a cook, either, but she does have a penchant for the dos and don'ts of tea. For more on her stand on this social ritual, see Last Bite on page 178.

JOANNA SAVILL

Joanna Savill has been a Sydney food explorer for most of her life and in a professional capacity (as a journalist, television presenter and restaurant writer) for just under two decades. These days she's co-editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* and director of the Sydney International Food Festival (October 2010), so it looks as if she might reach that 20-year landmark. "There's always something new to discover and report," she says, "but I'm just as happy ducking out to the suburbs to revisit an old favourite." In recent times Food Festival business has taken her to a few pretty fabulous high spots in France and Spain, as well as Yotam Ottolenghi's nifty Islington café (see page 110), almost as hard to get into on a Sunday morning as Mr Adrià's establishment near Barcelona.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN BELSHAM BY KEN DOWNIE; JANE CLIFTON BY DAVID WHITE



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Usually my family is happy to let me do the reading of *Cuisine*, and the cooking, and to partake in the results. But in this May issue Al Brown has led us all on a culinary journey

WINNING LETTER

Angela Transom has won 12 bottles of the five-star Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 2007 (see below).

First, well done on your new layout. It is a great change for a fantastically inspirational magazine I have been reading and enjoying for more than 10 years now. The May issue has been an exceptional one as far as my family is concerned. Usually they are happy to let me do the reading and the cooking, and to partake in the results. But this issue Al Brown has led us all on a culinary journey. My husband was so inspired by the hunting pictures that he has been out most weekends catching ingredients – along with our very excited son. We have already tried Al's twice-cooked duck from the May 2008 issue, while the rabbits are prepared and waiting to be done into the Braised Rabbit with Pappardelle, Olives & Prunes from this year's May issue. The hare is proving a bit fast, but once my hunters succeed, that is the next recipe, along with venison. Lucky for us, all these animals roam free on the farm we live on.
Angela Transom, via email

Is there anything on the planet that can compare with our indigenous scenic and culinary birthright? I think of this every time I open a *Cuisine* magazine to read and savour Al Brown's and Ray McVinnie's contributions in particular. Their features bring to mind my family's own mid-morning Hauraki Gulf banquets of scallops fried in the pan at the back of the brother-in-law's yacht, or the East Cape camping evenings where the children's bucketful of blue maomao complements the fresh paua fried in butter and garlic over the driftwood fire. Or of lazy nights on the beach where the prospect of tomorrow's crayfish tantalises the senses and the memory of the conversation, underlain by wave sounds and and overhung by evening stars, will remain long after the holiday is over.
Kay Houlding, Mt Maunganui

I am a 51+ female heading off to Christchurch next week to start as a student at a cooking school. *Cuisine* was the first food magazine I ever purchased and the May issue is just superb. Thanks for helping me along the way. You are never too old.
Kem Ormond, Hawke's Bay

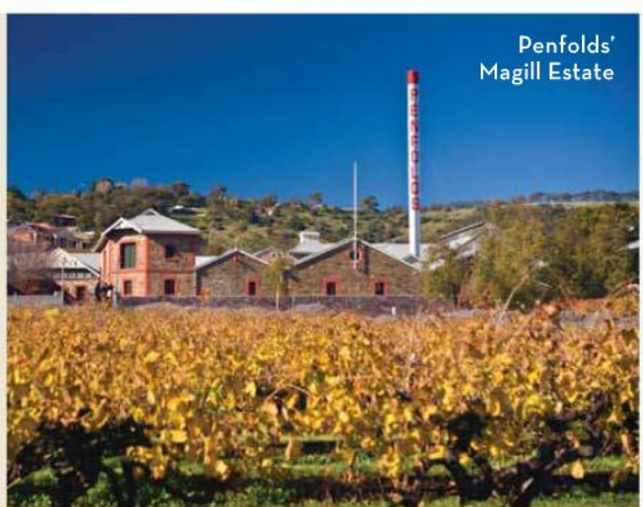
I have long been haunted by the overcooked, colourless, pungent vegetables of my childhood. I became very inventive about how to get rid of them: carrots were lobbed into plant pots; cauliflower florets were slipped up my sleeves. So I was so grateful to find all the delicious, seasonal produce ideas in the May issue. Vegetables are now the main act on the plate – not disguised under layers of cheese, pasta sauce, batter (tempura) or gravies – but vibrant and colourful, radiating health and tastiness. I think everyone needs that reminder that eating seasonal is healthy, it's cheaper and, with a few *Cuisine* ideas, tastes wonderful.
Katharine Pickford, via email

■ Due to space restrictions, all these letters have been abridged.

SCHUBERT'S LEGACY

AN ASSURANCE OF CONSISTENT QUALITY

The creator of Penfolds Grange, Max Schubert, went about things a little differently. He didn't believe that great wines should have bad years. His conception was for a clear consistency of style over vintages and for that he used multi-regional blends. He used the same proven approach with the Penfolds Bin range, intended to be "not the same as Grange, but similar". These wines bring more immediate pleasure than the must-cellar Grange. The Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 2007 certainly brought pleasure to our Shiraz tasting panel, earning five stars in this issue's Shiraz tasting.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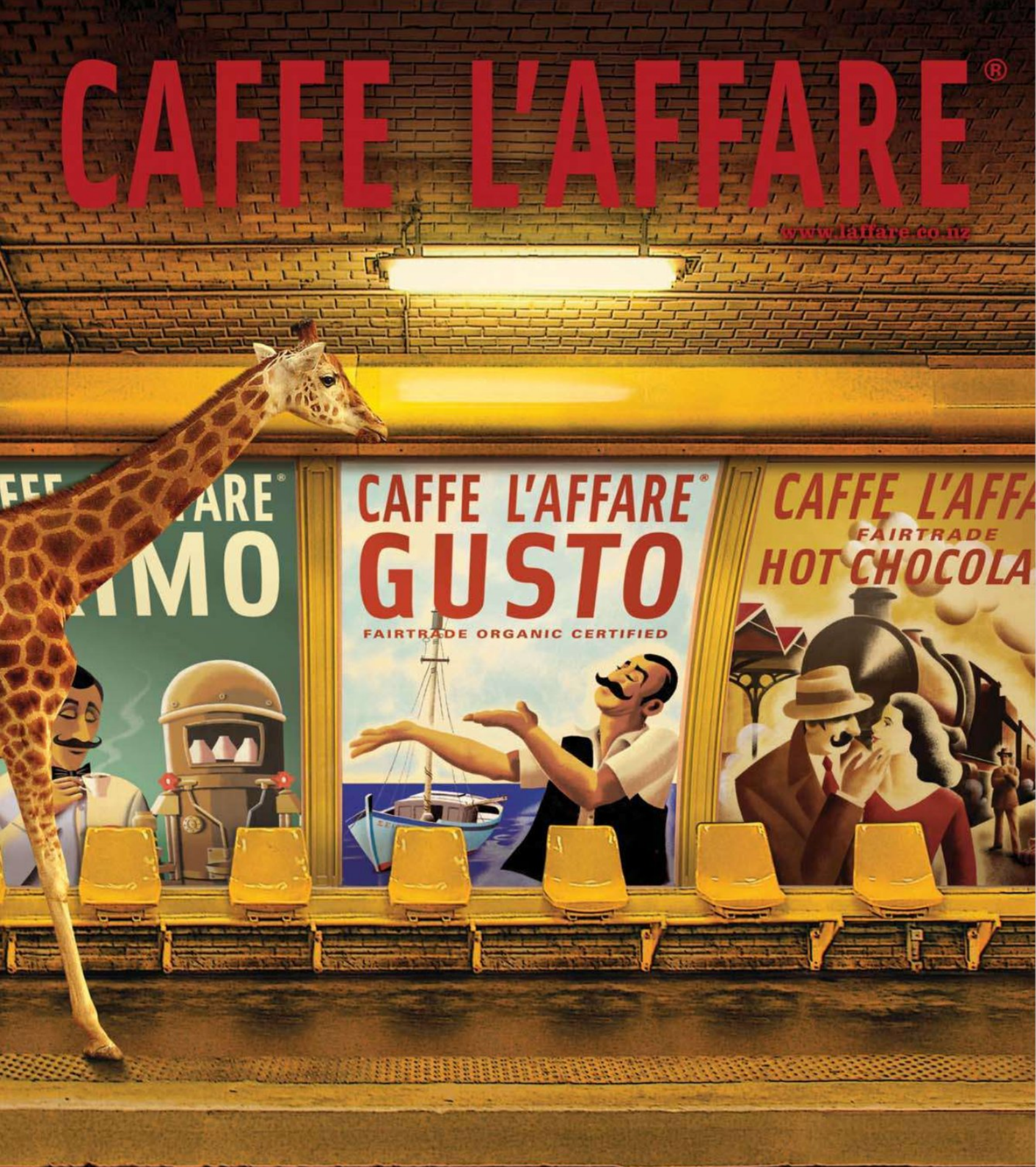

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news & views

MR tea

A WORLD FIRST HAS BEEN BREWING IN THE WAIKATO – NEW ZEALAND TEA

It has been a long few rows to hoe, but New Zealand-based company Zealong has recently launched the first tea grown in this country. It was 1996 when the father of Vincent Chen (pictured), newly emigrated from Taiwan, noticed how well camellias, cousin to the tea plant, grew here. The seed was planted. Vincent started his plantation of oolong tea in Gordonton with 130 seedlings imported from Taiwan. Today, one million tea plants are harvested by hand three times per year – grown without chemicals or additives and processed by hand. While oolong tea is normally grown at an altitude of some 2000 metres, Gordonton, just 50 metres above sea level, is ideal thanks to its temperature range. The unblended, single-source tea, which can be re-infused up to eight times without losing its flavour, is so far served in several Auckland establishments (Vinnies, Café on Kohi, Takapuna Beach Café and Richmond Rd Café) and can be ordered online. zealong.co.nz ✻ TONI MASON

KEN DOWNIE

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Cuisine test-drove the Worchester Sauce in some fine Bloody Marys

A SAUCE FOR ALL SEASONS

Like most Kiwis, Petone-born chef Jared Drake grew up with Worcestershire sauce. This he would sprinkle over the white bread delivered with the steaks at Wellington's Green Parrot and Steve's Café in Petone.

Still today farmers eke out their tiddler lunchtime steaks in the "period" café next to the Feilding Saleyards, despite sauce running off the buttered bread and forming pools that turn the slices soggy.

Over the years, Jared tried many different Worcestershire recipes, then decided to create his own: a sauce that could not only be sprinkled over white bread, but slathered generously over brunch or breakfast – a softer version at the chutney end of the flavour spectrum.

He wanted to tone down the extremes of others: the overtly fruity apple flavour of the Kiwi brand Whitlock's or the extreme chilli and black pepper heat of the original, Lea & Perrins (the Australian brand Cornwell's he also found too hot and peppery). Light on the chillies, Jared is generous with the anchovies, which, along with shallots, apple cider vinegar, molasses and tamarind, he regards as the core of any Worcestershire sauce. His own "secret" is star anise.

Brought to the boil, a giant stockpot of the brew is left to macerate in the fridge for three days, after which it is strained off through a not-too-fine sieve.

Jared calls his Worchester, which seems fitting, as this is how many Kiwis pronounce the shortened name (when, as Jeeves would inform you, it's "wooster", as in Bertie). Jared makes the sauce in partnership with his boss, Jude Best, at the catering kitchen she and her husband Greg have at Ohariu Farm in Ohariu Valley near Wellington. **ohariufarm.co.nz**

DAVID BURTON

LEMON AID The Cuisipro Citrus Juicer (far left) has an adjustable pulp selector and two reamers for large and small fruit. We like the Hector lemon squeezer (left) for handmade style (hectorpottery.co.nz). And the cast-iron squeezers (right; also available in lime size) are old favourites, as is the Microplane zester.

Breath of French Air

Whether you choose to sip coffee at the wine-barrel tables or explore the intimate interior packed with deli treats and loyal locals stocking their larders, The French Butcher in Auckland's Parnell is a journey into the joys of south-west France.

The latest venture of French-born Christian Ben Hassan (ex-Pyrenees in Devonport and Newmarket) has his signature tapenades, terrines, cheeses, charcuterie and takeout lasagne, as well as seemingly endless French delicacies.

1 Ayr St, Parnell, Auckland, ph: 09-358 2363, the frenchbutcher.co.nz

SUSAN BUCHANAN

WE FANCY

- Mutton bird or titi – roasted well, it's a slightly more salty version of the über-fashionable restaurant dish duck confit, and likewise traditionally preserved with salt in its own fat.
- Top-quality Scarborough Fare Herbs grown by Pam Maurice and Jeanette Rae.
- The new Chilli Tapenade by TopShelf Foods – a fiendish kick for antipasto platters. Available nationwide at specialty food stores and good supermarkets.
- The chutneys and sauces by Due North of Kaitaia, with most ingredients home-grown.

CITRUS APPARATUS & SAUCE: JASON CREAGHAN; BUTCHER: KEN DOWNIE

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Sourdough to cry for

Daniella Essell

The Swedish Bakery and Café could only exist in a city like Nelson, which swarms with homesick Swedes, Danes and Germans, along with well-travelled expats from Britain and North America.

German tourists have been known to cry at the sight of the 100 per cent rye sourdough, while Swedes relish the fresh knäckebröd, a hard flatbread favoured by the Vikings. For Francophiles, there's a rigorously traditional baguette.

Each year, owners Bronwyn and Dennis Eriksson bring out a young baker from Sweden. Currently they have 26-year-old Daniella Essell, with three years' training and seven years of baking behind her.

Both the sourdough pain au levain and baguette are risen twice before baking, a process that goes over three days. The difference in taste is palpable and even customers with gluten allergies can eat the sourdoughs, which have had their gluten largely consumed by the fermentation process.

Come winter, when the wealthy expats return for their northern-hemisphere summer, the bakery falls on harder times. "We turn into a soup kitchen, offering soup with some of our European bread, which we see as a way of educating Kiwis, particularly those who have never travelled," says Bronwyn, who was born in Auckland but lived with Dennis in Sweden for 15 years.

"They see bread as something you buy as cheaply as you can, ideally as a $4.99 deal with a litre of milk at the service station."

54 Bridge St, Nelson, ph: 03-546 8685

DAVID BURTON

Handmade heaven

Jo Coffey, of L'Arraire au Chocolat in Wellington, is now offering her exquisite handmade chocolates online. The fetching designs are done with cocoa butter transfers and include chilli, honey, saffron, cardamom and hazelnut praline.

L'Affaire au Chocolat, 464 Adelaide Rd, Wellington, or urbanharvest.co.nz

CHOCOLATES: JASON CREAGHAN; BAKERY: STEPHEN GOODENOUGH

GO AL! Chef and *Cuisine* senior food writer Al Brown hooked a big one with his brilliant book *Go Fish*, winning the Best Single Subject category at the prestigious International Association of Culinary Professionals Annual Cookbook Awards recently.

We have five copies to give away courtesy of publisher Random House. Email us with "Go Fish" in the subject line at competitions@cuisine.co.nz

Go *Fish* is published by Random House NZ, RRP $65

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THE COMFORT OF STRANGERS

The hottest place to dine in New York right now isn't a hip gastropub or a five-star restaurant – it's a perfect stranger's home. Private dinner clubs have been sprouting up all over town and spots at their get-togethers are in high demand.

Zora O'Neill and Tamara Reynolds started their twice-monthly Sunday meals in Astoria, Queens, "as a neighbourhood thing", says O'Neill. Now the **Sunday Night Dinner in Astoria** has more than 5000 New Yorkers on its mailing list. For around $NZ50 (and an obligatory bottle of wine) those quick on their email RSVPs gain entry to a home-style dinner for 20 held in Tamara's small apartment, at two tables set with mismatched china and cutlery. Their book *Forking Fantastic!* (Penguin) explains it all. **oneasskitchen.blogspot.com**

At **a razor, a shiny knife**, a club run by chef Daniel Castaño and host Michael Cirino, the food is fancier and punters can pay up to $450 to dine. The pair have done more than 30 events over the past few years, including an audacious re-creation of 2008's famous Achatz-Keller dinners – three 20-course meals created by super-chefs Grant Achatz and Thomas Keller. **arazorashinyknife.com**

Mike Lee's **Studiofeast** "culinary collective" started offering its more Asian-influenced meal events in 2007. Dinners cost from $50 on up, depending on the theme, venue and meal. "I try to keep [the guest list to] half people I know, the other half complete strangers," explains Lee, who works as a digital marketing specialist by day. "That way we keep it fresh." **studiofeast.com**

KIRSTEN MATTHEW

Lemon tarts

To make the tart on the cover, heat the oven to 180°C. Butter 6 x 8cm fluted tart tins. Line with 350g sweet shortcrust pastry and chill for about 30 minutes. Blind bake for 10 minutes, remove the beans and bake for a further 5 minutes. Cool on a rack.

Combine 2 tablespoons of water with 2 tablespoons of cornflour to make a paste. In a saucepan, heat ⅓ cup caster sugar and ½ cup water until the sugar is dissolved then add 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest and ⅓ cup lemon juice then bring to a simmer. Mix in the cornflour paste and stir until the mixture thickens (2-3 minutes). Remove from the heat and beat in 50g butter and 3 egg yolks. Pour into the tart cases and chill. Makes 6.

Auckland's Neat Meat now delivers nationwide. Order by 8am for top-quality meats to be delivered the following day or the same day for Auckland. neatmeat.co.nz

Comb to the Table

Big fans as we are of J. Friend & Co single-source honey (its Wild Thyme was a winner in the 2010 *Cuisine* Artisan Awards), we're more than excited by its latest offering: Raw Honeycomb. Collected from West Coast rainforests in the South Island, the honey is a blend of rata, mahoe, putaputaweta and kamahi. Honeycombs will vary from year to year, with this vintage being wonderfully floral ($17.95 for 340g). It looks stunning on a cheeseboard, served as a dessert with good ricotta or thick yoghurt, or as a simple treat on toasted crumpets with too much butter. **nzartisanhoney.co.nz** FIONA SMITH

ROSS SEA ALERT Wellington restaurant Logan Brown is donating $2 from every fish dish they serve to The Last Ocean trust, which is trying to protect Antarctica's Ross Sea – one of the last ecosystems not seriously affected by humans – from the ravages of factory fishers. Logan Brown goes to great lengths to ensure its fish are sustainably caught, sourcing its line-caught snapper from Northland on advice from Greenpeace. **loganbrown.co.nz**

HONEY: JASON CREAGHAN; TART: AARON McLEAN; DINNER CLUB: JENNIFER MAY / DISTRIBUTED BY THE NEW YORK TIMES SYNDICATE

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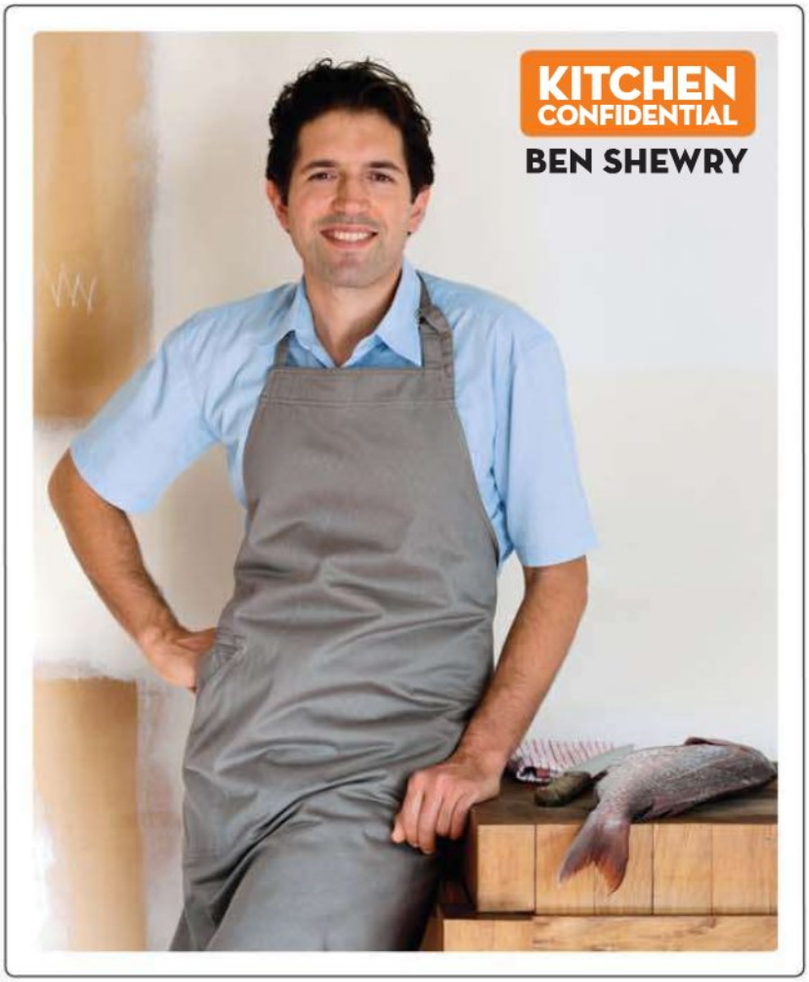

PORTRAIT: CATHERINE SUTHERLAND

2010 HAS BEEN THE YEAR FOR BEN SHEWRY, HEAD CHEF AT ATTICA IN MELBOURNE.

In March the 32-year-old became the first New Zealand chef to stage a demonstration at Europe's most influential gathering of chefs, Madrid Fusion, while in April, Attica was ranked 73rd in the S.Pellegrino World's Best Restaurant awards.

But while he may have made his name in the wider world, Shewry is not letting anybody forget he grew up on a Taranaki farm. Inspired by the flavours of his childhood, he obtains soil from his potato supplier and bakes spuds in the earth they were grown in, hangi style, before serving them with dried trout, smoked curd, coffee, burnt coconut husk and wild saltbush leaves.

A conical pile of snowcrab capped with puffed rice recalls Mt Taranaki, while Terroir, an assemblage of grated cake, toasted barley and dried berries, is inspired by early memories of picking wild strawberries and blackberries.

A leading proponent of Australia's wild food movement, Shewry and his team spend two hours a day foraging the outskirts of Melbourne for the 45 wild plants that feature on his menu throughout the year. His chefs also begin the menu from scratch each day, making his kitchen one of the most demanding in Australia: "It's hard on me and hard on my team."

Like many an ambitious chef, Shewry depends on his wife (also Kiwi-born) to look after his three young children.

"I work 70 hours a week at Attica – and that's not counting the three and a half hours a day I spend commuting."

Nevertheless, he still manages to cook on his days off.

"Recently, I cooked a whole pork shoulder on the bone in my home smokehouse, 15 hours over wood, like Southern American barbecue cooking."

He also makes pizza for the family in his domestic pizza oven, not to mention good old spag bol.

"It's a cliché, but I've enjoyed it my whole life."

As his mentor, Shewry names chef Mark Limacher, his former boss at Wellington's Roxburgh Bistro.

"Mark feels I had to move to Australia to get recognised," he says, adding wistfully that he misses his family, Kiwi ingredients, our green countryside – even the rain! **DAVID BURTON**

WHY BEAN SELECTION MATTERS

At Allpress we all share the same desire, to bring you the best possible tasting coffee.

There are many steps in achieving this goal and it begins with the selection of green beans.

When purchasing beans our decisions are based on a simple premise... "it must bring exceptional flavour to the cup"

We spend a great deal of time carefully choosing only the best Arabica beans. Our journeys to Central America and Africa ensure we are constantly selecting high grade beans from small estates and co-operatives. Evaluating the growing altitude of the beans and the care and attention to their drying and milling all has a huge influence on flavour in the cup.

THIS IS WHY OUR COFFEE TASTES SO GOOD

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allpressespresso.com

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UNDER THE GRILL

Longtime broadcaster and former newsreader, **John Hawkesby** is a gentleman vigneron on Waiheke Island, sought-after MC and after-dinner speaker, and a keen diner.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN FOOD? When I first tasted vegetables that hadn't been cooked to death in a pressure cooker.

WHAT'S YOUR FIRST FOOD MEMORY? Gagging on limp, overcooked cabbage which smelt like damp towels. It was revolting, repulsive and rejected.

WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL DINNER PARTY MENU? Retro prawn cocktail, (prepped by me), organic pork fillet with fresh steamed broccolini and a spinach, toasted walnut, blue cheese and pear salad. And to finish, anything with coffee and meringue or an affogato.

WHO WOULD BE YOUR DREAM DINNER GUESTS? Michael Parkinson, Billy Connolly, Dorothy Parker, Emmylou Harris and Taika Waititi.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DEATH ROW DINNER? An extraordinarily long dégustation dinner, spread over as long as possible, with a bottle (or maybe two) of Château Latour 1961.

YOUR PICK OF FOOD DESTINATIONS? Lots to choose in Sydney, Kitchen's in Edinburgh, and Herzog's in Blenheim, to name a few.

WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF THE WORST FOOD CRIME? "Do youse want chups with that?" Or too many sauces swamping the food.

WHO IS YOUR FOOD HERO? Anyone who has a passion for cooking, knows how it works and doesn't try to be too clever.

WHAT'S COMING NEXT IN THE FOOD WORLD? Still waiting for the return of Wiener schnitzel, ham steaks, rissoles and fondues.

WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD? To ask the egg who came first.

Stand by your van

Drivers in bright vans are pulling up on New York streets to sell home-cooked fare. First there was Wafels & Dinges, the Belgian waffle truck. Then Van Leeuwen, the artisanal ice-cream van, appeared in SoHo. Then came Mud Truck, which sells proper espresso (so hard to find in NYC).

The Big Apple is overrun with mobile canteens producing fabulous food. The Jamaican Dutchy in midtown specialises in jerk chicken (jostling for parking with a barbecue van, a halal cart and other meals-on-wheels providers). In Brooklyn, at the Red Hook baseball fields, about 10 Latin American food purveyors dish up flautas, ceviche and huaraches. And all over town vehicles like the Treats Truck and Dessert Truck keep sweet-toothed New Yorkers satiated with ice-cream, cupcakes, biscuits and slices. The trucks have a cult following, thanks to super-fresh ingredients and low prices, which can mean a long – but worthwhile – wait in line.

See vanleeuwenicecream.com, themudtruck.com, treatstruck.com, desserttruck.com, wafelsanddinges.com

KIRSTEN MATTHEW

World Chef Showcase

Spend a weekend with the world's best chefs

October 8-10, 2010

A must-see event of the Sydney International Food Festival presented by Citibank, as part of Crave Sydney

What happens when two dozen international stars get together to demonstrate their culinary brilliance to an exclusive, food-loving audience?

You get the World Chef Showcase at Sydney's Star City.

See the chefs in action: New York's Wylie Dufresne (WD-50), Marcus Wareing (The Berkeley, London), Paul Cunningham from Copenhagen (the new cutting-edge dining destination), along with the leading lights of Asia, the Middle East and Australia, including Neil Perry, Peter Gilmore and Rick Stein.

Get your World Chef Showcase passport now at www.siff.com.au or ticketmaster.com.au

The Sydney Morning Herald SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL FOOD festival | citibank

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market kitchen

Dunedin's Otago Farmers' Market may attract more than 8000 people on Saturday mornings but the trust that runs it isn't resting on its laurels in its aim to promote local food. It is now the proud owner of a mobile kitchen. Alison Lambert (who worked at London's River Café) and chefs from Otago Polytechnic take it to the market to show how to use the produce, and it is used to take the local food message to schools and community events. Lambert has already inspired students at Otago University with inexpensive one-pot meals to feed a flat of five, and had children cooking potatoes and other vegetables grown in a nearby market garden. **CHARMIAN SMITH**

RAISING THE BAR

Transport yourself this winter with this heady mix: Bombay Sapphire gin, Noilly Prat vermouth, elderflower cordial, pomegranate molasses and cranberry juice. Shake well with ice, strain into a martini glass and garnish with some flamed orange zest for extra fragrant zing. Served at the Scotch Wine Bar, Blenheim.

COCKTAIL: KIERAN SCOTT; PIE, JASON CREAGHAN; MARKET KITCHEN, SHARRON BENNETT

Auckland's Sabato has launched savoury house-made pies in tempting flavours from Italy, Morocco and two Spanish – beef, beans and pimientos, or the Basque lamb with Espelette peppers

A SECOND PLATE, PLEASE

The inaugural Wellington on a Plate last year proved such a hit that this year the festival will double in size. In restaurants, bars, theatres, museums and hotel function rooms all over Wellington, 82 food and drink events will take place during the last two weeks of August.

As many as 91 restaurants have signed up to Dine (offering set lunches for $25 or $35 with a glass of Wairarapa wine).

Martin Bosley and Rachel Taulelei of the City Market

Other highlights include: a celebration of 30 years of Ata Rangi; food tours; chances to create your own coffee, olive oil or spice blend, or step into the shoes of a winemaker or cocktail waiter; and a culinary weekend in Martinborough.

For the red-blooded, there are also: Beervana; an offal-themed dinner; a New York steak night; and a Scottish night with champit tatties, bashed neeps, cullen skink, and a toast to the haggis with malt whisky. Last year's big hit, Beer vs Wine, returns: five courses matched to both wine and beer, with votes taken. (Last year, a room stacked with Beervana goers gracefully ceded to wine.)

It kicks off on the night of 14 August with Devour, the Gala Dinner to be held in the City Market, lit up with fairy lights, lyric tenor Benjamin Makisi and mystery guests. The dinner will be prepared by Martin Bosley and his team.

wellingtononaplate.com, brewersguild.org.nz/beervana, citymarket.co.nz

More at ebook-free-download.net or magazinesdownload.com

WIN a five-star food-lover's extravaganza in Sydney

Be part of the exciting World Chef Showcase at the Sydney International Food Festival in October, courtesy of *Cuisine*

VIEW FROM SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, SYDNEY

The World Chef Showcase weekend is one of the star-studded drawcards at this year's Sydney International Food Festival (SIFF) in October. As a festival sponsor, *Cuisine* is delighted to offer a lucky winner the chance to join us at this inspiring event as part of a luxury long weekend for two.

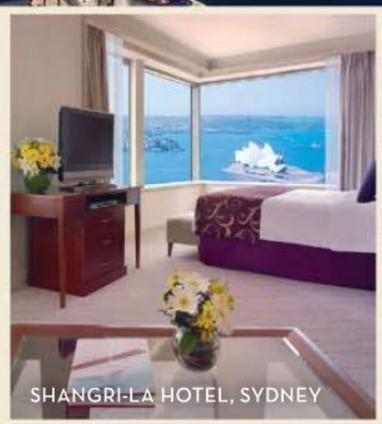
THE INCREDIBLE PRIZE FOR TWO INCLUDES:

- Return Emirates flights to Sydney (7 and 11 October)
- Four nights at the deluxe Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney
- Tickets to the World Chef Showcase (9-10 October)
- VIP tickets to the exclusive World Chef Showcase opening night cocktail party
- Dinner at Australian celebrity chef Neil Perry's latest restaurant, Rockpool Bar & Grill in Sydney, to the value of A$400
- Cocktails at the Shangri-La's Blu Bar on 36 to the value of A$50
- A 12-month subscription to *Cuisine*

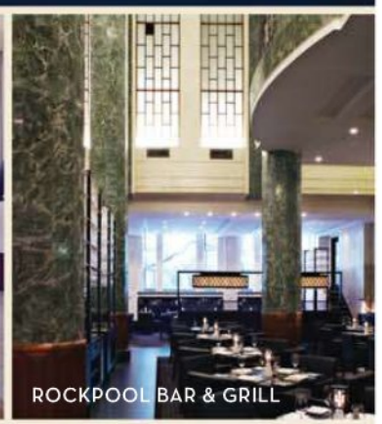
HOW TO ENTER

To be in to win, describe in fewer than 25 words your ultimate highlight, should you attend the Sydney International Food Festival.

Write your name, address, daytime phone number and email address on the back of an envelope and send to:
Sydney Food Festival Competition, c/- *Cuisine*, PO Box 5317, Wellesley St, Auckland 1141
OR email competitions@cuisine.co.nz with SIFF in the subject line, to reach us on or before 18 August.
For full terms and conditions see page 176.



SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, SYDNEY



ROCKPOOL BAR & GRILL

WORLD CHEF SHOWCASE WEEKEND

at the Sydney International Food Festival 1-30 October

On 9-10 October, the World Chef Showcase will bring together the stars of Australia's restaurant scene and up to 20 top international chefs and authors for a series of cooking demonstrations, tastings and talks. Star attractions include New York's Wylie Dufresne (wd-50), Marcus Wareing (Marcus Wareing at The Berkeley, London) and British-born Paul Cunningham (The Paul, Copenhagen), along with other luminaries from Asia and the Middle East. The festival's month-long feast of exceptional events will include classes, tours and tastings.

MARCUS WAREING

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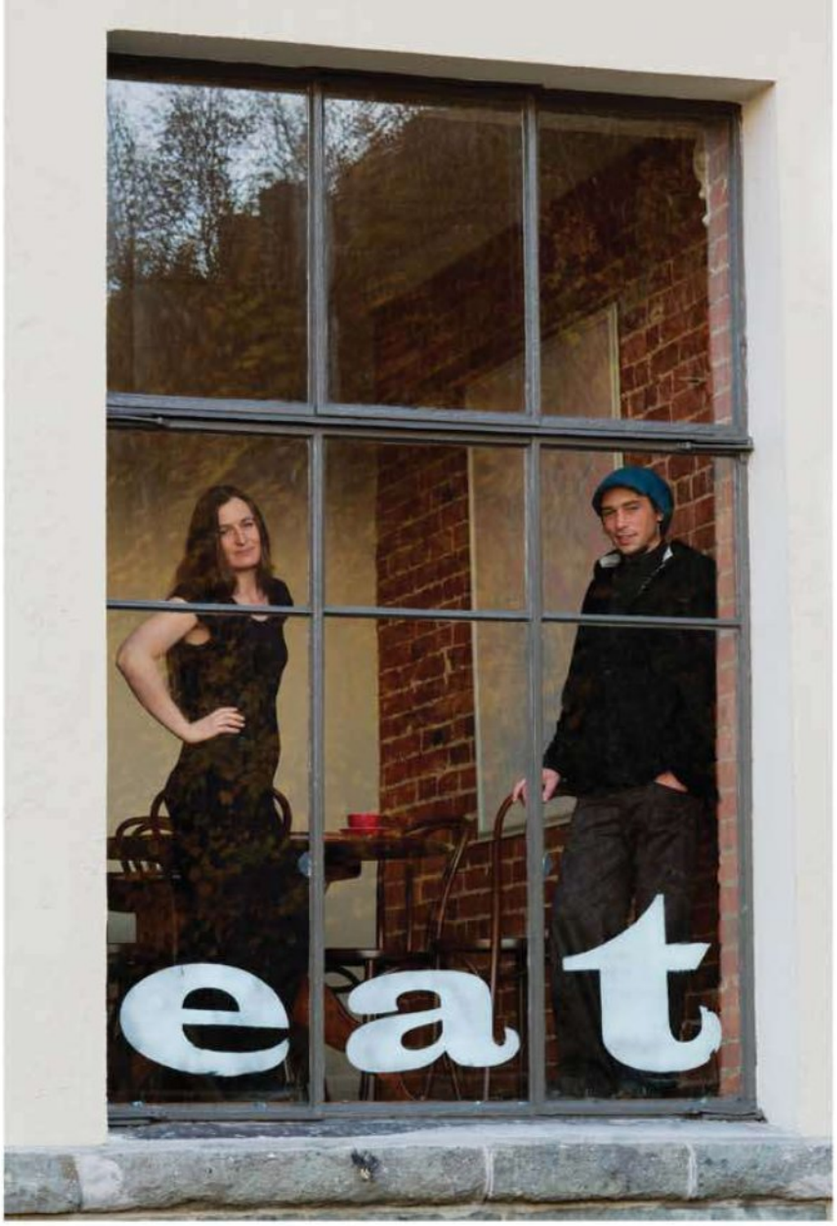

Great eats April Nijland and Chris Trotter, who ran Crema Café at Karitane, have opened Eat, a café in Dunedin's historic Commercial Building. The pared-back interior suits the simple, flavoursome food made with local ingredients. Trotter's menu offers selections on themes, such as filo pies with a variety of fillings. Good coffee, and homemade bread and croissants. **Ph: 03-477 4689, eatondowlingstreet@hotmail.com** CHARMIAN SMITH

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC When you shop for fresh salmon at the supermarket, scrutinise it closely first. Does the flesh have a dense, glossy appearance, or does it seem looser in texture? Is it deep orange or is the colour slightly more insipid? Does it smell absolutely fresh, or has it perhaps suffered a little during its progress across the Tasman? For, while the labelling in the chiller cabinet might simply read "salmon", you may well be buying the vastly inferior Atlantic species farmed in Tasmania. New Zealand law requires that all farmed salmon be chinook (known here as quinnat and elsewhere also as king), a skittish species that's harder to control than Altantic salmon, but repays the extra effort with a superior product. Unlike Atlantic, which has its fat concentrated in a layer beneath the skin, chinook has omega-3 oils distributed throughout the flesh, giving better mouthfeel. The difference is also apparent after cooking: chinook holds its colour, whereas Atlantic becomes washed out. It has penetrated some 10 per cent of our supermarkets, mostly in the South Island and Wellington. DAVID BURTON

IN SEASON
CELERIAC

Falling into the "ugly but worthy" camp of vegetables is celeriac, the root of a specially developed variety of celery. The large swollen root has a brownish yellow, gnarly outer layer, which makes it look distinctly unpromising.

The outer layer needs to be removed to reveal the creamy-fleshed interior. Some people think it should be peeled, but personally I've always used a knife to remove the thick layer of skin.

As the flesh discolours and turns brown on contact with air, it needs to be placed in acidulated water (water with lemon juice added) when peeled. However, this is purely for cosmetic reasons – it doesn't affect the flavour.

With a nutty flavour much like celery, the vegetable's sweetness is brought out by cooking. It can be cut into cubes or sliced, then roasted (particularly good with thyme).

It can be steamed, sautéed, made into a gratin (with or without other root vegetables), mashed, served as a purée and is delicious in soups.

It can also be used raw – the classic French treatment is rémoulade: grated or julienned celeriac with Dijon mustard and mayonnaise. But it is also good with olive oil-based dressings – try grating it into a coleslaw – and it can handle strong flavours such as capers, anchovies and the like.

Look for celeriac that is heavy for its size and firm to touch. Try to buy celeriac that's about the size of your fist or slightly larger. Very big celeriac is often soft and spongy inside. GINNY GRANT

EAT, SHARRON BENNETT; CELERIAC, RANDY MAYOR / GETTY IMAGES; SALMON, KIERAN SCOTT

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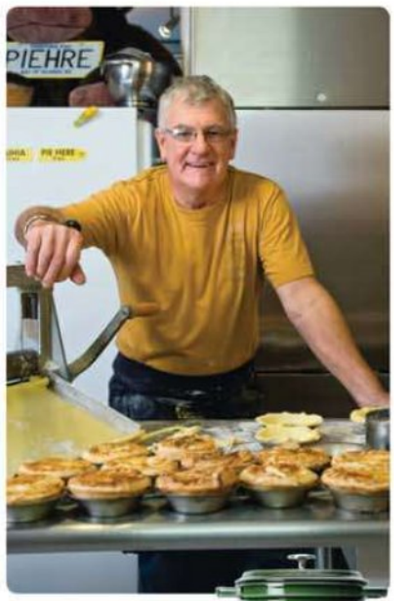
HAWAII PIE-O Kerikeri pie-maker Gary Burnett, of Pie Here, has been in Hawaii passing on the secrets of his pies and other Kiwi classics to the chefs at the new Kiwi Roadhouse bar/restaurant on Maui. Brainchild of Maui resident, West Auckland-born Waren Stone, the venue will offer such Kiwi icons as roast lamb with kumara and potatoes, and pavlova. Also on the menu will be Burnett's pastry parcels of chicken satay, seafood chowder, peppered steak and more.

Kerikeri pie devotees applaud the recognition, as long as their champion returns.

kiwiroadhousemaui.com
Pie Here, 94 Kerikeri Rd, Kerikeri, ph: 09-407 4079 SUSAN BUCHANAN



COCOTTE POTS Again available in New Zealand, French favourite Staub's signature La Cocotte enamelled casseroles feature clever studs on the undersides of the lids to ensure continuous basting. Each pot is individually moulded in cast iron, ensuring even heat. **See thehomestore.co.nz, thescullery.co.nz, kirkcaldies.co.nz, tfe.co.nz**

TRAFFIC

- The Loaded Hog on Wellington's waterfront has been relaunched as **FOXGLOVE RESTAURANT AND BAR**.
- New Malaysian restaurant in Majoribanks St, **SERAI**, has replaced Thai restaurant **PHUTHAI ESARN**, which has shifted to Cambridge Tce.
- Wellington's beloved **MARANUI SURF CLUB** café has reopened after restoration following the fire that gutted it last year.
- Christchurch chef-restaurateur Tony Astle has closed his tapas experiment, Estudio-S at 131 Victoria St. The site now hosts a second **CHINWAG EATHAI** café and bar (the original is still at 161 High St).
- Red Square (133 Worcester St), the only licensed Russian restaurant in Christchurch, has a new owner. **TOMMY BI**, from China's Shandong province bought the site to open a Chinese restaurant but was won over by the existing food.
- **MT HUTT** is offering Dinner with the Stars (astral not terrestrial) at Huber's Hut on Friday evenings in July and August. Menus will feature game and other high country produce. Transport from Methven provided. To book, ph: 03-302 8811.
- **KRISHNA BOTICA**, of Auckland's Prego, is opening a Vietnamese restaurant in the Excelsior building at Britomart with Tony McGeorge, co-founder of the Ponsonby Social Club, and ex-Prego chef and Vietnam aficionado Jason van Dorsten.
- Former La Zeppa co-owner Mandy Lusk and husband Eugene Gibson have opened **RAGU**, a restaurant and wine bar in Auckland's Pt Chevalier at 5 Pt Chevalier Rd, ph: 09-815 9595.
- Also formerly of La Zeppa, Alisdair Gribben and partner Wendy Sutherland have opened steakhouse **MARVEL GRILL** under the Takapuna Berkeley Theatre. Ph: 09-486 2249.

PIE MAKER, KEN DOWNIE; POTS, JASON CREAGHAN

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diary dates

JULY

6-11 **FOOD FOR THOUGHT** With workshops such as the science of curry, the food-themed 2010 New Zealand International Science Festival in Dunedin is a must for aspirant molecular gastronomists. scifest.org.nz

8 **WHITE TIE WINTER BISTRO** (also 12 Aug and 16 Sept) Auckland's White Tie Catering repeats last year's success, with its secret roving winter restaurant that dots down in an exotic new location each month (details given 24 hours ahead). Places limited. Ph: 03-365 2837, whitetiecatering.co.nz

23 **WALK & FORK DÉGUSTATION** Join Sir George Fistonich and Villa Maria Group Winemaker, Alastair Maling MW, at Bracu Restaurant, Bombay, to enjoy their favourite Villa Maria wines with a five-course menu by Bracu's executive chef, Adrian Brett-Chinnery. Tickets limited. bracu.co.nz

29 **THE FOOD SHOW AUCKLAND** At ASB Showgrounds, Greenlane, until 1 August. Don't miss our special subscription offer to *Cuisine*. Find us at stand 223 with five of our 2010 Artisan Awards winners. foodshow.co.nz

AUGUST

4-5 & 7-8 **RICK STEIN'S FOOD ODYSSEY** Two shows only at Auckland's Aotea Centre (4-5) and Wellington's St James Theatre (7-8). ticketek.co.nz

7 **BIG NIGHT IN THE CAVE AT MAHI WINES** Italian dinner by Christchurch chef Jonny Schwass at Mahi vineyard in Marlborough. mahiwine.co.nz

27-28 **BEERVANA** Meet Kiwi brewers at the Wellington Town Hall and try winning beers from the 2010 BrewNZ Beer Awards. beervana.co.nz

SEPTEMBER

1-20 **FEAST OF CANTERBURY** The region's newest culinary festival will be its largest, showcasing the area's finest restaurants, wineries, growers and personalities over three weeks. Events include two masterclasses with Al Brown at Akaroa Cooking School (11 and 12 September, places limited). See feastofcanterbury.co.nz and akaroacooking.co.nz

18 **Feast of Canterbury Giveaway** Win a table for 10 valued at more than $1600 at the Hats Off Gala Dinner at Riccarton House during the Feast of Canterbury festival (see above). Prize includes a 10-course dégustation dinner plus matching wines. To enter email competitions@cuisine.co.nz putting Hats Off in the subject line to reach us by 15 July.*

7 **SUPPER CLUB 2010 - WELLINGTON** Charity event for Ronald McDonald House. A mystery draw determines which of the city's fine restaurants your party will dine at. givealotoflove.co.nz

*NON-TRANSFERABLE PRIZE DOES NOT INCLUDE TRANSPORT TO VENUE OR ACCOMMODATION. EMPLOYEES OF FAIRFAX AND TASTE CANTERBURY, SPONSORS AND IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS MAY NOT ENTER. WINNER DRAWN 16 JULY AND NOTIFIED 19 JULY.

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- A double pass to The Food Show Preview Day on 29 July
- Front-row seats at Ray McVinnie's cooking demonstration and the chance to meet him on the Preview Day
- Two-year subscription to *Cuisine*

For full terms and conditions see page 176

STAND #223

COME AND SEE *CUISINE* AND SOME OF OUR ARTISAN AWARD WINNERS AT THE FOOD SHOW!

- Don't miss our special subscription offer
- See *Cuisine*'s Ray McVinnie and Al Brown in action, at their cooking demonstrations

ENTRY DETAILS

Enter online at cuisine.co.nz and click on Giveaways, or write your name, address and daytime phone number on the back of an envelope and send to:
Cuisine Food Show,
PO Box 5317,
Wellesley St,
Auckland 1141

Hilton Auckland

The Food Show

THE FOOD SHOW AUCKLAND
ASB Showgrounds, 29 July to 1 August
foodshow.co.nz

More at ebook-free-download.net or magazinesdownload.com

Mamasita

mexican fave

Authentic Mexican food is the latest craze to hit Melbourne and its finest exponent is Mamasita, the late-night tequila bar and restaurant opened by Matt Lane, a veteran of hip New York taquería La Esquina, and Jason Jones, a chef who has worked his way around Central and South America.

Buzzing late into the night, the no-bookings first-floor spot at the Paris end of Collins St has an impressive list of aged tequila and an easy-to-love menu, with dishes such as soft tacos with shredded pork, pineapple and coriander; quesadillas with Mexican truffle; tostaditas topped with guacamole, white fish and serrano chilli; or chicken in a chocolate-spiked mole. And not a plate of nachos in sight. **mamasita.com.au**

ONE FISH, TWO FISH, LITTLE FISH, BIG FISH

Chef with the Midas touch Paul Wilson has done it again, this time rebranding the Albert Park Hotel's underperforming dining room into the seafood-based Oyster Bar & Grill. Expect artisan oysters from New South Wales producer Moonlight Flat, alongside a list of "little fish" and "big fish" – the former featuring a decidedly retro angels on horseback, the latter more than 12 varieties of sustainable fish cooked whole on the woodfire barbecue or plancha. **thealbertpark.com.au**

Oyster Bar & Grill

Lab partners Here's a new entry for the dictionary: mozzarella laboratory. It's how Kirsty Laird and Giorgio Linguanti describe their new artisan cheese shop La Latteria in Carlton, where they hand-shape and stretch mozzarella daily. Drop by for buffalo mozzarella, bocconcini, burrata, smoked scamorza and more. lalatteria.com.au

Ocha

CHANGING ROOMS

After 15 years in Kew, pint-sized Ocha, the Japanese restaurant with a waiting list bigger than its tiny 30-seat room, has grown up and moved out. Taking up residence in the Hawthorn redevelopment of the Beehive Tavern, next door to Michael Lambie's gastropub Barkers Wine Bar and Bistro, the new Ocha has the same staff and the same ethereal menu of modern spins on Japanese classics. But with a room more than three times the size of the old – and an indoor toilet, to boot – it ought to be three times easier to get a booking. Theoretically, at least. **ocha.com.au**

FITZROY FANTASIAS The reputation of New Zealand-born Pierre Roelofs (pictured below) went global when the Melbourne-based pastry chef (ex-Vue de Monde and Interlude) won an Espai Sucre award for best restaurant dessert in Barcelona last year. Now he's eschewed the bright lights of fine dining to take up a Thursday night residency at a humble Fitzroy café.

Pop by Café Rosamond to taste one, two or three courses of his trademark whimsical, deconstructed dessert fantasias featuring combinations such as cassis, gin and tonic (below), or coffee, pineapple and pasta. **pierreroelofs.com**

LARISSA DUBECKI

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Dietmar Sawyere

SAWYERE WINGS IT Chef Dietmar Sawyere has left the great big tall building in Chifley Square (Forty One) and opened the old-is-new-again French bistro Ad Lib, in Pymble on the restaurant-deprived north shore, a few steps closer to his riverside fine-diner, Berowra Waters Inn. Ultra-classic hors d'oeuvres include charcuterie and onion soup gratinée, and there's a fruits de mer list, duck confit and, yes, chocolate mousse. Special seven-course dégustations on the first Sunday of each month include a truffle dinner on 1 August. **adlibbistro.com**

Sailors set sail

David Thompson sold his share a while back and longtime chef Ty Bellingham has left for New York, but Sailors Thai is still rolling out replicas. Along with the original restaurant in the Rocks, last year saw the installation of Sailors Thai Potts Point (formerly Oy). Now there's another, Sailors Thai Ivy (**merivale.com**), at the city's glam Ivy complex, in the old Teppanyaki site. And, yes, the betel leaves with crab, coconut, chilli, lime, ginger and peanuts are on.

Another accomplished name on the Thai food scene, Mai Busayarat, is heading up Manly's new China Beach (**ph: 02-9976 0024**). It's an offshoot of Woollomooloo's China Doll – but with a strictly mod-Thai menu (yes, China Beach is in Vietnam, but hey).

Sailors Thai Ivy

PAMPAS POMP The guys from Kika tapas bar – the kitsch space with Almodóvar-inspired crucifixes – have been having fun again, this time with Maradona posters, gaucho chic and a serious Argentinean grill. The new Darlinghurst meatery, Boca, is all about asado – slow, whole-animal barbecuing. It's hot on the heels of a slew of churrascarias (Brazilian all-you-can-eat grills). **boca.com.au**

Enopizzeria

molto italiano

Who said Sydney ever tired of Italian? The old Tre Scalini site just off Hyde Park – scene of many a blow-out 1980s lunch – has been reborn as a Milanese trattoria La Pesa (**lapesa.com.au**), serving all the things you'd expect – not least great osso buco and risotto alla Milanese.

In Bondi Junction, meanwhile, it's all about Romagna. Chef Andrea Riva is baking classic piadina (flatbreads) and wrapping real Romagna-style cappelletti (aka tortellini) around truffled pecorino at Amarcord Ristorante Italiano (**ph: 02-9369 4071**). La Tana (**ph: 02-9310 2311**) on Cleveland St serves Venetian cicchetti (tapas) and spritzes – the archetypal Venetian aperitivo; and Mauro Marcucci (who launched Surry Hills' popular Pizza e Birra) has opened Enopizzeria (**ph: 02-9953 0022**) in Neutral Bay, with delicious pizzas and a smart wine list.

JOANNA SAVILL

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Neudorf's cellar door; right: Tim and Judy Finn

The Tim & Judy show... 30 harvests on

Thirty vintages have passed since Tim and Judy Finn first established their winery on the site of an old hippie commune in Nelson's Upper Moutere. Over the decades, through their ardour and commitment, they've built Neudorf into a brand with international cachet. Celebrating their 30 harvests, they reflected on things present and past.

TIM ON THE WEBCAM HE SET UP OVERLOOKING THE WINERY YARD DURING THE 30TH VINTAGE "It probably only appeals to the geeks, though it's quite funny. The vineyard guys have threatened to work naked one day to see if anyone actually visits the website."

JUDY ON THE WINE SCENE 30 YEARS AGO "In those days the internet was a rumour, fax machines were cutting edge and Müller-Thurgau was considered the smart grape."

JUDY ON WHAT IT TAKES TO SUCCEED "It starts with a vision and that has to continue through everything you do... from innovation in the vineyard, through a mix of flair and attention to detail in the winery, to the look of the bottle and taste of the wine on your table. In a small business like this we also need and cherish the best people."

TIM ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY "It's sad and has not been created just by the world recession; it is also the fault of short-sighted late investors who have no love for wine – they are simply in it to make a buck." JOHN SAKER

"The vines issued the exact amount of fruit they were able to ripen. In my heart I think 2010 will be better than 2007... and possibly may become one of those very, very special vintages"

– Rippon winemaker Nick Mills on his 2010 Pinot Noir harvest

SHELF LIFE HARD CASE GLASS

There's now a wine-friendly alternative to glass for settings like picnics where you still want to enjoy good wine at its best. The new polymer Govino wine glass boasts of being able to "reflect the wine's colour and aromatics much like crystal". It's shatterproof, reusable and recyclable. bytheglass.co.nz JOHN SAKER

Victor's spoils

Vic Williams' burgeoning career as a teetotaller ended one night in New Caledonia when he was 21, wrecked by a plate of fresh oysters washed down with Moët & Chandon. It was replaced with a new vocation that saw Vic emerge as a much-loved and respected wine scribe. His accomplishments were recognised recently when he was named Lewisham Award Lifetime Achiever 2010. JOHN SAKER

TO BORDEAUX, WITH RESPECT

On the eve of a special Gimblett Gravels tasting at Château Brane-Cantenac, co-host Steve Smith MW of Craggy Range explained the event's significance.

"This isn't competitive or media driven. The Bordeaux producers have nothing to gain directly. They invited us to Margaux in the heart of Bordeaux because they're interested in what we're doing here. They respect us as peers and that's a hell of an accolade."

Invited wines: Craggy Range Sophia and The Quarry, Trinity Hill The Gimblett, Church Road Tom, Sacred Hill The Helmsman and Villa Maria Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot.

NEUDORF CELLAR DOOR, STEPHEN GOODENOUGH

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to throw out a shoot bearing Pinot Gris fruit, and vice versa. This penchant for cross dressing can be seen in bunches that are half-half, and even in single berries. Our shot of a Pinot Gris vine having trouble making up its mind is part of a study by Plant & Food Research and Lincoln University. Pinot Groir, anyone? JOHN SAKER

Berry indecisive

The Pinot family's genetic instability can lead to interesting mutations in the vineyard. A Pinot Noir vine can one day decide

WIDOW'S PEAK Non-vintage (NV) Champagnes are usually bought for an immediate celebration where they rapidly disappear. But a recent visit by Veuve Clicquot oenologist François Hautekeur suggested Veuve's own NV Yellow Label can age gracefully. He produced from his luggage a number of older Yellow Label magnums. None of the wine scribes present came close to picking the age of the oldest, which dated back to 1953. The year of the Queen's coronation and Hillary's ascent of Everest was an excellent vintage in Champagne and the wine, with its faint suggestions of lovely old cognac, had retained remarkable freshness. That's Champagne royalty for you. SUSAN BUCHANAN

THE FERMENT

Few local Pinot producers hold back their wines as long as Central Otago's Surveyor Thomson. The **SURVEYOR THOMSON PINOT NOIR 2007** has only just been released, a full three years after vintage. "2007 was such a gorgeous vintage. Our style is quite earthy and savoury and we don't want to push it out before it's ready to drink," says Surveyor Thomson GM Sharon Flavell. The wine is available through mvauron.co.nz

Villa Maria, under the guiding hand of Sir George Fistonich, has been showing the same desire for and success in passing environmental milestones that it has in winning wine awards. The latest green tick was achieving CEMARS certification. In so doing, Villa Maria has joined Palliser Estate as the only two New Zealand wineries to meet CEMARS' strict requirements for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Waitaki Braids winemaker **Michelle Richardson** credits getting through her 25th vintage to *Cuisine* 2010 Artisan Award-winning Pic's Really Good Peanut Butter...

"That peanut butter is divine on sourdough and a great pick-me-up around 5pm. Vintage was always a good time to lose weight until I discovered that."

GRAPE PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE TROUGHT

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quick smart

Winter vegetables don't deserve their dreary reputation, says **Ray McVinnie**

Good food is not about fashionable ingredients or those that fit the current health theory. Eating a moderate and varied diet of dishes from traditional cuisines makes the strange contemporary obsession with nutritional information redundant for most people. Good food is often the result of using whatever is in season and value for money. So nothing should escape our gaze, not even those winter vegetables associated with the sort of depressing food institutions serve. Cabbage, swedes and broccoli have their own charm and are used to good effect by cutting-edge chefs. This was illustrated by Danish chef Mads Refslund, one of the founders of award-winning Copenhagen restaurant Noma, at the Langham Melbourne Masterclasses in March – one of his sensational signature dishes was based on root vegetables. The dishes here use such vegetables for first courses or as sides with meat or seafood. Many are complete enough to be great on their own. However you use them, they will liven up winter meals.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY McVINNIE / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT / STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

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STARTER PLATTER

For a great first course, steam some **asparagus** and serve it hot on a large platter sprinkled with lots of chopped soft-boiled **eggs**, **capers**, **chervil** and **tarragon leaves**, **lemon zest** and a vinaigrette made with **lemon juice**, **extra virgin olive oil** and a spoonful of **Dijon mustard**. Finish with crisp panfried **breadcrumbs**.

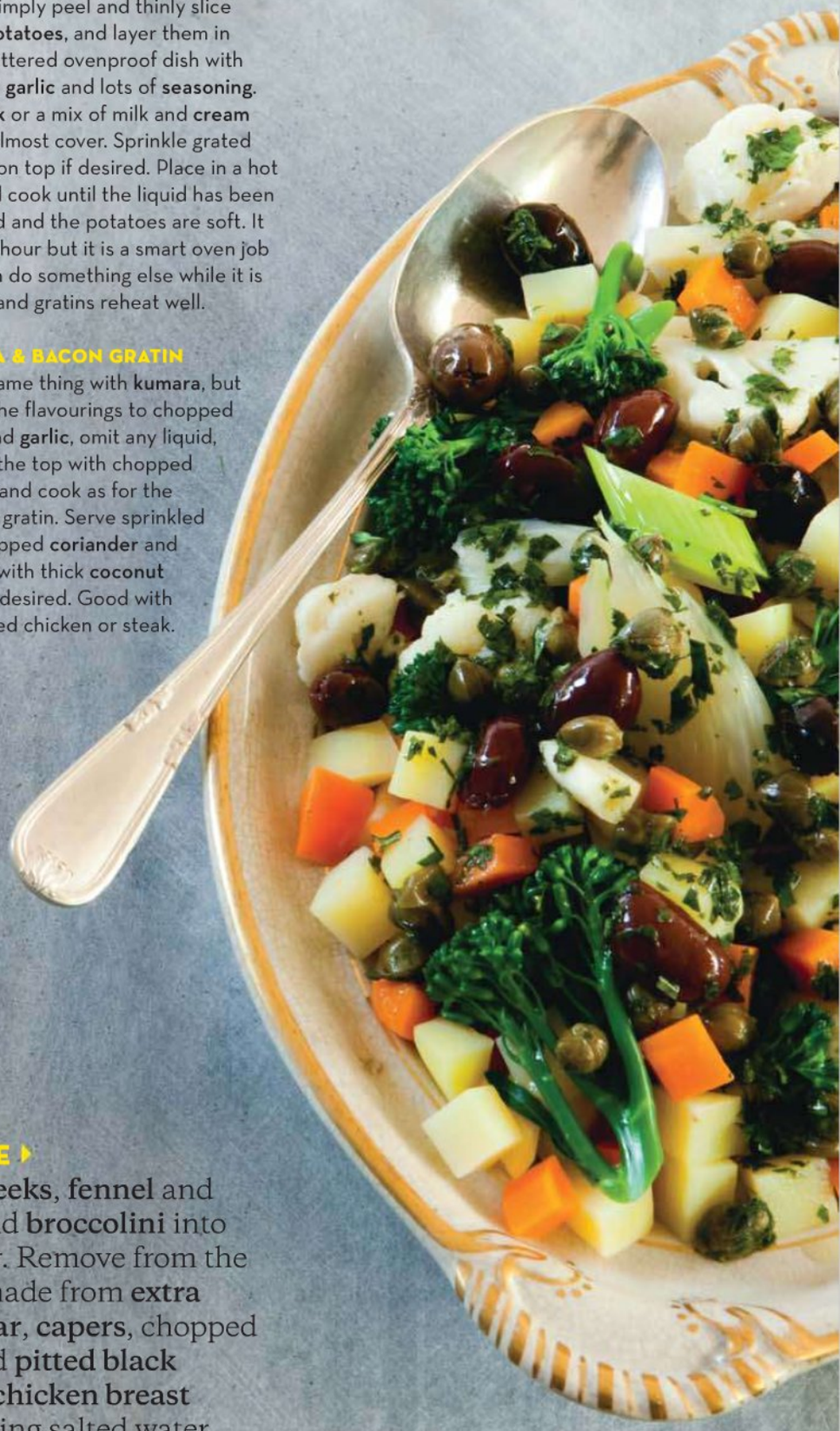
SLOW-COOKED BROCCOLI Panfry chopped **onions**, **garlic**, **yellow mustard seeds**, a pinch of **chilli flakes** and **lemon zest** until the onions are soft. Add plenty of **broccoli** or **broccolini** florets and the peeled thicker stalks (once peeled they cook to a tender nutty-flavoured version of the florets). Add a splash of water, season, cover and slow-cook for about 20 minutes until the vegetables are soft. Serve sprinkled with plenty of crumbled **feta** as a vegetarian dish or without as a side with steak, fish or chicken.

SPICED CAULIFLOWER & POTATO Place plenty of **cauliflower** florets and 2cm-diced peeled **potatoes** on a large roasting tray. Sprinkle with **cumin seeds**, a few **fennel seeds**, chopped **garlic**, **ground ginger**, a big pinch of **chilli flakes**, a little **ground cinnamon** and some **peanut oil**. Season well and toss the vegetables until well coated with the oil and spices. Spread the vegetables out and roast for 20-25 minutes until tender. Remove from the oven and toss everything with a little **plain unsweetened yoghurt**. Serve with lamb or chicken.

SLOW-FRIED LEEKS Slow-fry lots of thinly sliced **leeks** with lots of **garlic**, **lemon zest** and thinly sliced **button mushrooms** until the leeks are very soft. Season and serve with roast chicken or panfried garlic prawns.

POTATO GRATIN Is there anything as good and as easy to make as a potato gratin? Simply peel and thinly slice lots of **potatoes**, and layer them in a well-buttered ovenproof dish with chopped **garlic** and lots of **seasoning**. Pour **milk** or a mix of milk and **cream** over to almost cover. Sprinkle grated **gruyère** on top if desired. Place in a hot oven and cook until the liquid has been absorbed and the potatoes are soft. It takes an hour but it is a smart oven job – you can do something else while it is cooking and gratins reheat well.

KUMARA & BACON GRATIN Do the same thing with **kumara**, but change the flavourings to chopped **bacon** and **garlic**, omit any liquid, sprinkle the top with chopped **peanuts** and cook as for the previous gratin. Serve sprinkled with chopped **coriander** and drizzled with thick **coconut cream** if desired. Good with barbecued chicken or steak.



WARM VEGETABLE VINAIGRETTE

Dice **carrots** and **potatoes**, slice **leeks**, **fennel** and **cabbage**, cut some **cauliflower** and **broccolini** into florets and steam until just tender. Remove from the heat and toss with a vinaigrette made from **extra virgin olive oil**, **white wine vinegar**, **capers**, chopped **parsley**, a little crushed **garlic** and **pitted black olives**, and serve with free-range **chicken breast** that has been poached in simmering salted water.

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LEMONY BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Brussels sprouts boiled until still slightly crisp, drained then tossed with **extra virgin olive oil** (**lemon-infused** is good if you have it), a clove of finely chopped **garlic**, **lemon zest**, finely diced **prosciutto** or **ham** and lots of chopped **parsley** are delicious on their own or with corned beef, sausages or poached chicken.

MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE KALE Boil **cavalo nero** or **curly kale** in plenty of salted water until tender. Drain, cool under cold water, squeeze dry and chop. Heat some **olive oil**, lots of **garlic**, some **pitted Kalamata olives** and **chilli** in a pan and panfry the cavalo nero or kale until hot. Season well and serve with a dribble of **extra virgin olive oil** and a squeeze of **lemon**. Good with beef, chicken or lamb, or by itself with some freshly grated **parmesan**.

GREEK SPINACH PIE For a quick pie in the Greek tradition, line a large pie dish with **filo pastry** brushed with melted **butter**, spread lots of **silverbeet**, **spinach** and **rocket leaves** over that have been wilted in boiling water, cooled under cold water, squeezed dry and chopped. Pour plenty of well-seasoned beaten **egg** over and finish with crumbled **feta** and **pine nuts**. Place in a hot oven and bake until well browned and set. Serve by itself or with roast lamb or chicken.

SAVOY CABBAGE WITH APPLES & ROASTED HAZELNUTS

SERVES 4

This is good with panfried duck breast or pork chops (pictured) and baked potatoes or a creamy mash. If you can't get moscatel vinegar, use cider or white wine vinegar.

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
3 handfuls thinly sliced Savoy cabbage
3 tablespoons moscatel vinegar
½ cup chopped roasted shelled hazelnuts
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
2 tablespoons butter
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over moderate heat.

Add the apples and garlic, and fry gently for 5 minutes until soft and golden. Add the cabbage and vinegar, and 3 tablespoons of water.

Cover and braise gently for 4 minutes, giving the pan a couple of good shakes during this time.

Uncover, add the hazelnuts, parsley and butter, mix well so the butter melts, taste, season and serve.

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GRATIN OF WITLOOF

SERVES 4-6

This could be a first course, a main course or a side dish to go with roast chicken or steak. If you can't get witloof, use blanched cauliflower florets or fennel.

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
100g pancetta, finely diced
6 shallots, thinly sliced
grated zest of 1 lemon
100ml white wine
300ml cream
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 witloof, halved lengthwise and blanched 1 minute in boiling water then cooled under cold water and drained well
½ cup breadcrumbs
1 cup grated gruyère

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Heat the oil in a pan over moderate heat and add the pancetta, shallots and zest. Fry gently for 10 minutes without browning. Add the wine and let it bubble for 30 seconds.

Add the cream, mix well, bring to the boil, taste and season. Remove from the heat.

Place the witloof in a shallow ovenproof dish side by side, cut side up. Pour the cream mixture evenly over the witloof, and sprinkle the breadcrumbs and cheese evenly on top. Bake for 20-25 minutes until everything is bubbling and golden, and the top crisp. Remove from the oven and serve.

PARSNIP PURÉE Parsnip purée is perfect with steak. Place chopped peeled **parsnips** in an ovenproof casserole. Add **white wine**, a pinch of **ground cloves**, a clove of **garlic** and some **milk** or **cream** to almost cover. Cover well and place in the oven at 200°C for 1 hour until the parsnips are collapsing. Remove and purée. Taste and season well. Serve with panfried or barbecued steak. It's also good with **duck breast** that has been rubbed with **garlic** and a little **cinnamon** then panfried.

POTATO FRITTERS Latkes are small Jewish potato fritters made simply from well-rinsed and drained grated **potato**, beaten **egg** and chopped **onion**. Fry spoonfuls of the mixture in hot **oil**; don't try to turn them until the bottom is well browned or they will fall to pieces. Delicious with **smoked salmon**, chopped **dill** and a dollop of **sour cream** (they are also good made with grated **pumpkin** mixed with the potato).

ROASTED BABY ONIONS Peel lots of **baby onions** (not that quick, but smart because they are cheap and delicious), place in an ovenproof dish with chopped **prosciutto**, a little **chicken stock**, a spoonful of **brown sugar** and a big splash of **balsamic vinegar**. Cover and bake for 1 hour until the onions are soft and the liquid caramelised. Serve with steak or pork.

SPICY CARROT PURÉE Make a spicy carrot purée by boiling chopped **carrots** until tender, then blending with **orange zest** and **juice**, **chilli flakes**, **honey** and chopped **coriander**. Once smooth, taste and season. Serve with roast chicken or panfried fish.

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SWEDE & HORSERADISH MASH
Peel and chop lots of **swedes** and floury **potatoes**, boil until very tender then purée with a knob of **butter**, **salt** and freshly ground **black pepper**. Stir in some **cream** and a couple of spoonfuls of **horseradish sauce** (my pick is the excellent Mandys Horseradish) and chopped **dill**. Serve with roast pork or beef.

ROASTED POTATO SALAD Peel Agria or your favourite floury **potatoes** and cut into 3cm chunks. Place on a large baking tray. Add **olive oil**, chopped **garlic** and **salt**, and toss with your hands until the potatoes are coated in oil. Spread out, place in the oven and bake for 45-60 minutes until crisp and golden, and they lift off the tray easily. If they don't, cook them a little longer. Transfer the potatoes to a dish and add a few handfuls of **watercress** sprigs, a couple of tablespoons of **cider** or **white wine vinegar** and a spoonful or more of **wholegrain mustard**. Toss and serve with beef, pork or fried fish.

STIR-FRIED SAVOY Heat a wok over high heat, add some **soybean oil** and finely chopped **garlic** and **ginger**. Stir-fry until slightly golden. Add thinly sliced **Savoy cabbage** and continue until the cabbage is hot but still crisp. Remove from the heat and add **sesame oil** and chopped **mint**, and serve with roast chicken, baked fish or stir-fried pork.

Credits: Antique cutlery and crockery from Antiques of Epsom. For full details, see Credits Index.

CREAMY LEEK, CAULIFLOWER & FENNEL PURÉE
Braise some sliced **leeks**, **cauliflower** and **fennel** in a covered pan with **butter**, a splash of **white wine**, **lemon zest** and **chervil** until soft. Purée and mix with a couple of spoonfuls of **sour cream**. Good with **smoked fish** that has been warmed with **garlic butter**, and wilted **spinach**.

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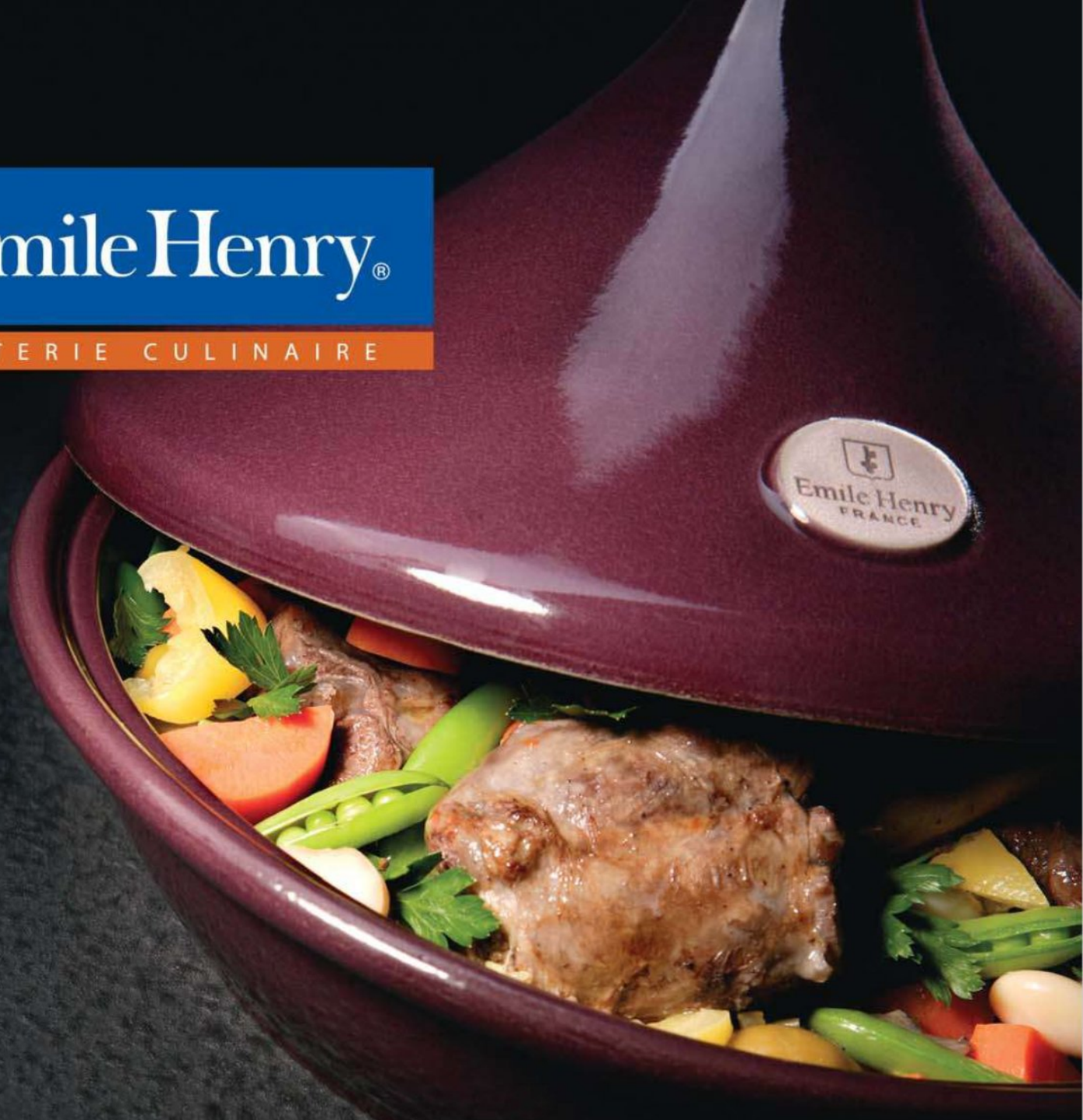

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lemon sours

Ralph Kyte-Powell has had the pip with his fair share of lemons

The word "lemon" has special meaning for me, and it has nothing to do with lemon meringue pie or garnish for my gin and tonic.

For me, "lemon" describes several of my automotive purchases over the years. The most recent four-wheeled lemon in my ownership has just been traded in, hopefully on a more reliable form of transport. Purchase of a horse crossed my mind, but eventually I opted for a Volkswagen.

What made my most recent lemon so spectacularly sour was the amount of trouble it gave in such a short time. I bought it brand new, but in the space of 18 months it broke down on the road three times, it was recalled by the manufacturer once, it spent a total of 20 days in the workshop.

The mechanics scratched their heads, reprogrammed its engine management system (whatever that is), fiddled with this and that, took various pieces of metal out of the engine compartment and studied them, climbed underneath, scratched their heads again, but were utterly bamboozled. Whatever had happened back at the "bleep" factory in mid-2008 to perplex them so?

This wasn't my first adventure with a lemon. My most tart previous motoring experience also came from France. It was a true *citron* but not a Citroën. Maybe my choice of colour for that car was an omen – bright lemon yellow – but I was blissfully ignorant of just how awful an automobile could be.

Everything went wrong with it over my three years' ownership. On one occasion, after picking it up from repair at the workshop, I drove off and the driver's seat suddenly reclined, leaving me hanging on to the steering wheel as though it was a lifeline in the surf. My mechanic endeared himself to me by responding with "they all do that".

Driving lemons has taught me some valuable life lessons, like not being ashamed to weep openly in a car workshop, how to grovel to people (in this case motor mechanics) in the hope of receiving favourable treatment, how important it is to familiarise yourself with public transport. It has taught me how to swear and curse for maximum impact.

Lemons have taught me valuable life lessons, like not being ashamed to weep openly in a car workshop, how to swear for maximum impact

There's another type of lemon, of course. I've had plenty of experience with them, too. A lemon tree in our backyard provided us with the versatile yellow fruit for years. It also provided sustenance for friendly local possums that stripped the fruit of their peel, leaving the tree covered in nude lemons.

We felt embarrassed for the poor lemons being exposed like that. We averted our eyes whenever we walked past the tree. The fruit were probably too sour for the possums, but not for us. We used them in all sorts of ways. A wedge in a gin and tonic; in a Middle Eastern marinade; salads; next to a grilled fish; in Chinese dishes; in cakes and puddings. And I once made them into the most liquid, sour, watery, awful marmalade imaginable.

Lemons are indispensable in the kitchen and their appeal crosses most food cultures. Sometimes their definite personality can be a problem, though. A friend of mine had a Sri Lankan girlfriend and she once offered to prepare an authentic Sri Lankan dinner for us. We loved spice, curries and the like, so waited with keen anticipation. Magnificent platters arrived on the table: dark curry fragrant with rampe (or pandan) leaves, assorted sambols, coconut roti, yellow rice. Lemons featured most emphatically in a side dish, pickled in vinegar and spiced with chilli powder. Thinking it was mango chutney, I slurped down a big mouthful. The ultra-hot, super-sour result caused me volcanic seizures – all very amusing to the others. Sadists. And so I learnt another lesson in my lemon education.

In the kitchen, treat lemons with respect at all times. Be careful of chopped lemons pickled in vinegar and chilli. Use some sort of setting agent in your marmalade. Lemons will repay you wonderfully. In the automotive world, give lemons the heave-ho. Apply the three strikes and you're out principle. If your new car gives you trouble three times, trade it in on something more reliable. Or buy a horse.

ILLUSTRATION BY DARON PARTON

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LA FAMIGLIA DI S.PELLEGRINO

Drawn from a thermal spring in the foothills of the Italian Alps, S.Pellegrino sparkling natural mineral water is synonymous with superior taste, quality and the essence of Italian style. Savoured at temples of fine dining the world over, this Italian icon has long shared a special bond with luxury brands such as Missoni, Bulgari, Alessi, Frescobaldi fine wine, and more.

One such partnership, that of chef Carlo Cracco from Ristorante Cracco, included in the top 100 of the S.Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list, and the prestigious fashion label Salvatore Ferragamo, has recently taken a new direction, through the lens of acclaimed US photographer Elliott Erwitt. One of the fathers of modern photography, Erwitt's style has captured some of the world's most memorable images, such as Marilyn Monroe's classic pose from the movie *The Ten Year Itch*.

Crafted against quintessential Italian backdrops, Erwitt's evocative photographic essay captures the essence of S.Pellegrino in a series of images portraying the pleasures of good food enjoyed with family and friends in stylishly picturesque settings.

The celebrated Ristorante Cracco in Milan brings the dining scenes to life; a Milan loft is the gathering place for friends; an idyllic Italian seaside village is perfect for the family picnic; and the world of fashion is encapsulated backstage at a specially styled Ferragamo runway show, where the classic chic of Ferragamo adds an extra dimension.

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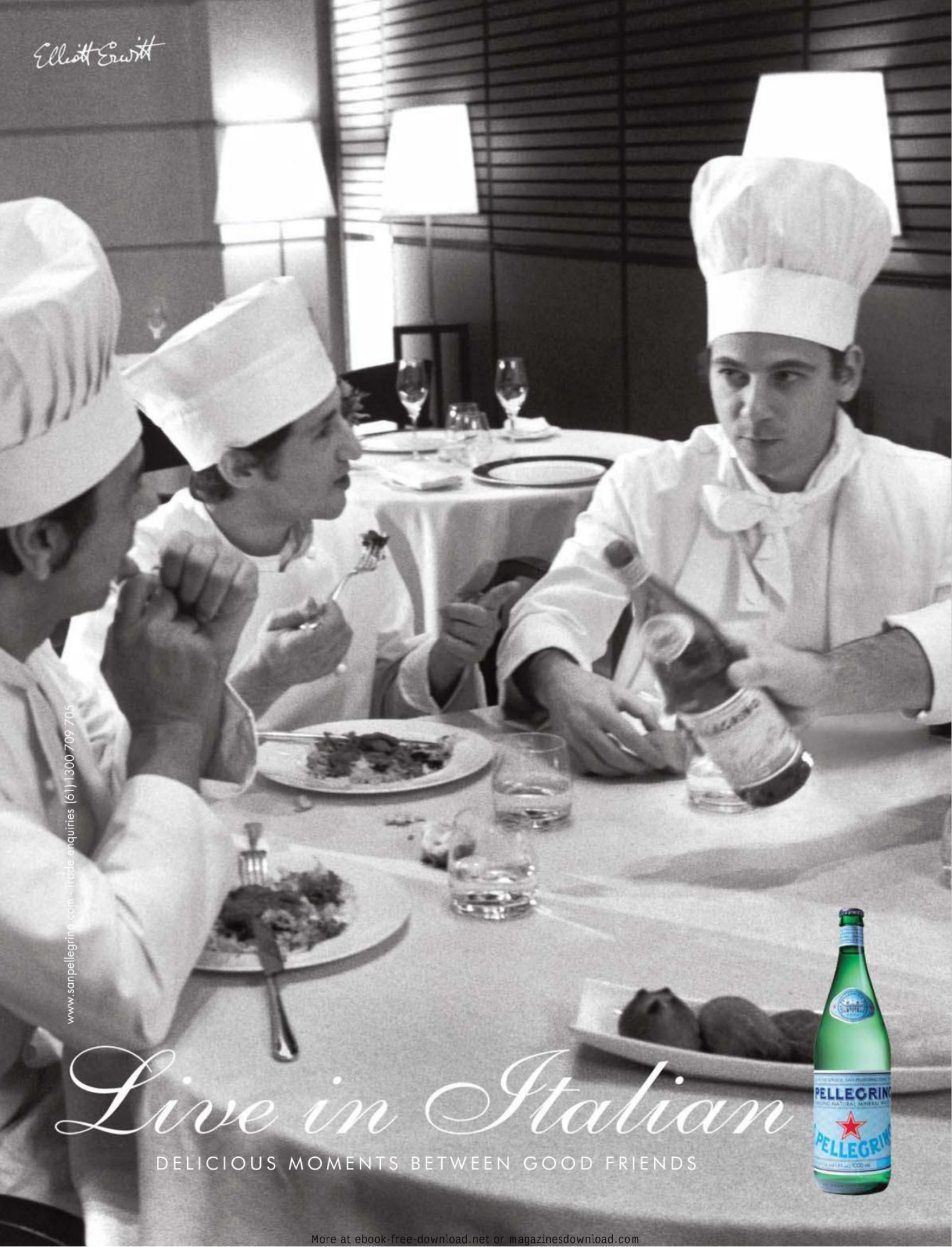

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Cuisine NZ RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR 2010 FINALISTS

We are delighted to announce the finalists in this year's **Cuisine NZ Restaurant of the Year Awards**, in association with Mercedes-Benz

Selecting the finalists this year, the sixth of this competition, was harder than ever, but we are of course delighted to see that the calibre of restaurants we enjoy in this country just seems to go from strength to strength. This is reflected in the number of finalists this year, which have increased from 40 to 50.

Our head judge is Kerry Tyack, who has been writing about and judging food and wine for more than 20 years. He oversees our panel of food and wine professionals. The finalist restaurants are visited anonymously by at least two judges, then the top-scoring restaurants are revisited by our international guest judge.

SO WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Naturally, excellent food and wine lists rate highly. The judges will be looking for top-quality ingredients, selected with season and region in mind, and expertly prepared, as well as wines chosen to match the food, clientele and establishment – and knowledgeable and professional staff. Mainly, we want to see restaurants who deliver what they set out to do.

The awards are open to all cafés and restaurants in business for at least six months. Winners will be announced in our September issue (on sale August).

CATEGORIES

- SUPREME WINNER
- BEST SMART DINING – METROPOLITAN
- BEST SMART DINING – REGIONAL
- BEST CASUAL DINING – METROPOLITAN
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MERCEDES-BENZ is again thrilled to support the *Cuisine* NZ Restaurant of the Year Awards, celebrating the pursuit of excellence and attention to detail, qualities that have underpinned the Mercedes-Benz philosophy since Karl Benz invented the first car.

"The consistently high standard of restaurants showcased in the awards shows a commitment to quality and innovation," says general manager, Coby Duggan. "The exceptional dining experiences displayed by the finalists reinforce the world-class calibre of the competition, and this year's increase to 50 finalist restaurants is further testimony to this."

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The calibre of restaurants in this country goes from strength to strength, reflected in the increase in finalists from 40 to 50

NORTHLAND

À Deco Whangarei
Ph: 09-459 4957

Puretastes Restaurant Paihia
puretastes.co.nz

AUCKLAND

Barolo Auckland City
auckland.langhamhotels.co.nz

Cable Bay Winery Restaurant Waiheke Island
cablebayvineyards.co.nz

Cibo Parnell
cibo.co.nz

Clooney Freemans Bay
clooney.co.nz

Delicious Grey Lynn
delicious.co.nz

Dine by Peter Gordon
Auckland City
skycityauckland.co.nz

Harbourside Seafood Bar & Grill Auckland City
harboursiderestaurant.co.nz

Merediths Mt Eden
merediths.co.nz

Mondial Café & Bar
Grey Lynn
mondialbar.co.nz

O'Connell Street Bistro
Auckland City
oconnellstbistro.com

O'Sarracino
Eden Terrace
osarracino.co.nz

Ponsonby Road Bistro
Ponsonby
ponsonbyroadbistro.co.nz

Prego Ponsonby
prego.co.nz

Red Elephant Newmarket
red-elephant.co.nz

Rocco Ponsonby
rocco.co.nz

Soul Bar & Bistro
Auckland City
soulbar.co.nz

SPQR Ponsonby
spqrnz.co.nz

The French Café
Auckland City
thefrenchcafe.co.nz

The Grove Auckland City
thegroverestaurant.co.nz

Tribeca Restaurant & Bar
Parnell
tribeca.co.nz

Two Fifteen Bistro & Wine Bar Mt Eden
twofifteen.co.nz

SOUTH AUCKLAND

Bracu Restaurant
bracu.co.nz

WAIKATO/ BAY OF PLENTY

Mount Bistro Mt Maunganui
mountbistro.co.nz

Palate Hamilton
palaterestaurant.co.nz

TAUPO

Bistro Lago
Napier-Taupo Highway
bistrolago.co.nz

HAWKE'S BAY

Black Barn Bistro
Black Barn Rd
(off Te Mata Rd)
blackbarn.com

Elephant Hill Estate & Winery Te Awanga
elephanthill.co.nz

Terrôir at Craggy Range
Havelock North
craggyrange.com

Vidal Winery Restaurant
Hastings
vidal.co.nz

MARTINBOROUGH

Wendy Campbell's French Bistro
Off Martinborough Square
Ph: 06-306 8863

WELLINGTON

Ambeli Mt Victoria
theambeli.co.nz

Bisque on Bolton
Wellington City
boltonhotel.co.nz

Gusto Bistro Petone
gustobistro.co.nz

Martin Bosley's
Clyde Quay Marina
martin-bosley.com

Matterhorn Wellington City
matterhorn.co.nz

Ortega Fish Shack & Bar
Mt Victoria
ortega.co.nz

Red Ginger Wellington City
redginger.co.nz

NELSON

Bouterey's at 251 Richmond
boutereys.co.nz

Hopgood's Restaurant & Bar
Nelson City
hopgoods.co.nz

MARLBOROUGH

Gibb's Vineyard Restaurant
Blenheim
gibbs-restaurant.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH

Pescatore Christchurch City
thegeorge.com

Restaurant Schwass
Phillipstown
restaurantschwass.com

Saggio di Vino Merivale
saggiodivino.co.nz

WAIPARA

Pegasus Bay Winery Restaurant Amberley
pegasusbay.com

CENTRAL OTAGO

Botswana Butchery
Queenstown
goodbars.co.nz

NORTH OTAGO

Riverstone Kitchen
Waitaki Plains,
12km north of Oamaru
riverstonekitchen.co.nz

DUNEDIN

Plato Dunedin City
platocafe.co.nz

Two Chefs Bistro
Dunedin City
Ph: 03-477 7293

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DINING WITH THE STARS

This is your chance to try the dishes of many of the 50 finalists in our 2010 NZ Restaurant of the Year Awards, matched with Villa Maria Estate wines. Fixed-price menus are on offer nationwide for lunch and/or dinner so take advantage of the special prices which include by-the-glass wines. Bookings are essential. See cuisine.co.nz for full restaurant contact details.

NORTHLAND

À Deco
Friday lunch $60
Entrée Orange Pekoe tea-smoked salmon, local white fish tortellini & citrus nage with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008
Main Osso buco, soft smoked cheddar polenta, green olives, & parsley & eggplant relish, with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Puretastes Restaurant
Dinner 7 days $65
Entrée Seared scallops, boudin noir, cauliflower, pomme maxim & Noble Riesling reduction with Villa Maria Reserve Barrique Fermented Gisborne Chardonnay 2008
Main Ballottine of beef brisket, horseradish tortellini & oyster mushrooms with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Merlot 2007

AUCKLAND

Barolo
Dinner 7 nights $75
Starter Squash flan, pistachio-coated panfried prawns & balsamic braised shallots with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Southern Clays Sauvignon Blanc 2009
Entrée Porcini mushroom risotto with shaved black truffle with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007
Main Seared venison, rosemary & garlic baby vegetables & cinnamon infused Dolcetto wine reduction, with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah 2007

Cibo
Lunch Mon-Fri $69
Entrée Pressed pork belly with scallop salad & peanut foam with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008
Main Herb crusted fish, steamed clams, celery purée & roasted oyster mushrooms with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009

Clooney
Dinner 7 nights $110
Chef's amuse-bouche
Entrée Quail, foie gras mousse, pickled nashi, maple & mustard with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009
Main Lamb, organic lentils, Jerusalem artichoke foam & sweet spiced Merlot jelly with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Merlot 2005
Seasonal pre-dessert
Dessert Valrhona chocolate sabayon tart, burnt milk gelato & hazelnut

Delicious
Lunch Wed-Fri $32
Main Gnocchi, porcini mushrooms, tomato, parsley & parmesan, with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Gimblett Gravels Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2006, followed by coffee served with biscotti

Dine by Peter Gordon
Dinner 7 days, lunch Fri $65
Entrée Grilled crispy twice-cooked pork belly & smoked kahawai fritter with lemon, coriander, bean sprout salad & sumac soft-boiled egg with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Keltern Chardonnay 2007
Main Roast lamb chump on minted feta & chilli lentils with broccolini, toasted macadamias, grilled baby leeks & tamarind caramel with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005

Harbourside Seafood Bar & Grill
The ever-popular $25 lunch (5-25 July)
Entrée Mussel & clam chowder OR pea & ham soup OR roast beef carpaccio OR fried squid
Main Tempura fish of the day OR grilled fish of the day OR chicken & mushroom casserole Served with your choice of Villa Maria Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc 2009, Pinot Gris 2009 OR Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2009.

Merediths
Lunch Thurs-Fri $45
Main Lamb rump, spiced chickpeas, chorizo, dukkah & medjool dates with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah 2007

Mondial Café & Bar
Dinner Tues-Sat from 4pm $28
Main Confit sausages, mash & red wine jus with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007

O'Connell Street Bistro
Lunch (11.30am-3pm), pre-theatre (from 5.30pm with tables vacated by 7.30pm) and supper (from 9.30pm), two courses $61.50 (without wine $32.50), three courses $68.50 (without wine $39.50)
Entrée Jerusalem artichoke & smoked eel soup with spring onion & truffle oil with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Gewürztraminer 2008
Main Braised lamb neck fillets, organic lentils, wilted kale, chorizo & confit garlic purée with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylors Pass Pinot Noir 2006
Dessert Blackberry & Valrhona Chocolate Pot with crushed amaretti biscuits

O'Sarracino
Dinner Tues-Sat $78
Entrée Antipasto selection of Napoletano-style vegetables, seafood salad, mozzarella, cherry tomatoes & prosciutto with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Southern Clays Sauvignon Blanc 2009
Main Pasta tubes with slow-cooked steak, onions & tomato, with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005 OR pasta stuffed with snapper & prawns with crayfish & mixed seafood in tomato sauce with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008

Ponsonby Road Bistro
Lunch Mon-Fri & dinner Mon-Sat $65
Entrée Goat's cheese croquettes with grilled pear, endive & pecan salad with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009
Main Confit duck leg & Puy lentils braised with bacon, porcini & spinach with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylor's Pass Pinot Noir 2006

Prego
Lunch and dinner 7 days $65
Entrée Crispy skin pork belly & pistachio nut roulade on peppered beetroot & spinach with peach aïoli with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Omahu Gravels Viognier 2007
Main Pan-roasted duck breast, vanilla mashed yams, sautéed cavalo nero, tamarillo compote & black fig molasses, with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005

Red Elephant
Lunch Mon-Fri and dinner 7 nights, special menu for two at $58 per person
Entrée Prawns wrapped in noodles & paper prawns with fruit vegetable cups with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009
Main Beef marinated in Thai spices AND chopped chicken & prawns with sweet basil AND steamed jasmine rice with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Gewürztraminer 2008

Rocco
Lunch Fri & dinner Tues-Sat $50
Main Paprika braised lamb, grana padano gnocchi & gremolata with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005
Dessert Fresh figs roasted with almonds, wild honey parfait & orange wafers with Villa Maria Reserve Noble Riesling 2009

Soul Bar & Bistro
Lunch & dinner 7 days (5-31 July) $70
Entrée Smoked salmon with salsa verde & toasted sourdough
Main Jerusalem artichoke risotto with truffle, parmesan & a poached egg OR roasted pork

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chop, Puy lentils, silverbeet & apple purée
Dessert Rhubarb & custard millefeuille, rhubarb sorbet & vanilla butter sauce OR Kaimai Creamy Blue – Waharoa NZ & Soul's oatmeal biscuits
Choice of two wines Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008; Reserve Marlborough Chardonnay 2007; Reserve Noble Riesling 2009

SPQR
Lunch 7 days $35
Entrée Cockles & chorizo broth with garlic, sherry, red onions, tomatoes & white wine OR Caprese salad OR Aussie prawn salad with avocado, radicchio & cos salad
Main Sautéed scampi tails, gnocchi & Napoletana sauce OR salted steamed snapper, spring onions & tomato concasse OR veal scaloppine crumbed with parmesan & parsley, & rocket salad with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008 OR Seddon Pinot Gris 2009 OR Taylors Pass Chardonnay 2006 OR Reserve Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007

The French Café
Lunch Fri $90
Main Caramelised pork belly, cauliflower purée, seared scallops, black pudding crumbs & apple salad with Villa Maria Reserve Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007
Dessert Crème caramel, toffee pear, vanilla jus, pear sorbet & crisp pear wafers with Villa Maria Reserve Noble Riesling 2009

The Grove
Lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, Sat dinner $140
To start Sashimi tuna, whipped avocado & shiso with Villa Maria Méthode Traditionnelle NV
Entrée Potato gnocchi filled with goat's ricotta, Jerusalem artichoke & medjool dates with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008
Main Roasted lamb rump, aubergine caviar, gremolata & Tokyo turnips with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah 2007
Dessert Caramelised banana galette with cinnamon & maple sabayon with Villa Maria Reserve Noble Riesling 2009

Tribeca Restaurant & Bar
Lunch & dinner Mon-Sat $75
Entrée Roasted French goat's cheese, Jerusalem artichoke pancake, baby golden beets & turnips, & red wine caramel with Villa Maria Reserve Marlborough Chardonnay 2007
Main Smoked & roasted lamb rump, braised fillet, pumpkin & feta, popped chickpeas & golden raisin vinaigrette with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah 2007

Two Fifteen Bistro & Wine Bar
Dinner Tues-Sat $79.90
Entrée Seared smoked salmon, pea purée, apple & bacon salad with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Fletcher Riesling 2008
Main Confit duck leg, kumara mash & wilted spinach with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007
Dessert Italian fritoles, lemon curd & vanilla ice-cream

SOUTH AUCKLAND
Bracu Restaurant
Lunch Wed-Sun, dinner Mon-Sat, two courses $55, three courses $65
Entrée Smoked salmon cannelloni, avocado salsa & lemon dressing with Villa Maria Reserve Marlborough Chardonnay 2007
Main Confit duck leg, millefeuille potatoes, wilted spinach & citrus jus with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005
Dessert Rose-scented panna cotta & elderflower jelly with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Gewürztraminer 2008

HAMILTON
Palate
Dinner Tues-Sat $70
Entrée Pea & bacon velouté, crisp pork, seared scallop & herb salad with Villa Maria Reserve Barrique Fermented Gisborne Chardonnay 2008
Main Green tea eye fillet, blue cheese pudding, white bean purée & truffled oxtail jus with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2005

MT MAUNGANUI
Mount Bistro
Dinner Tues-Sun $72
Entrée Crab tortellini & scallops in a saffron & herb infused scampi broth with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008
Main Seared venison cutlets & Denver leg rubbed with green peppercorn dukkah, onion & macadamia croquette & blackcurrant compote with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Merlot 2005

TAUPO
Bistro Lago
Lunch & dinner 7 days $65
Entrée Creamy Alaskan king crab bisque & seafood selection with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009
Main Juniper & pepper crusted venison fillet, courgettes, cipolline onions & artichokes, & citrus jus with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005

HASTINGS
Vidal Winery Restaurant
Dinner 7 days $60
Entrée Roasted black pudding, shallot ice-cream, smoked potato whip & cider jus with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Riesling 2008
Main Bluenose, gouda cheese & chive gratin nage of baby leek, butternut squash & courgette, & paua tortellini with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylors Pass Chardonnay 2006

MARTINBOROUGH
Wendy Campbell's French Bistro
Dinner Wed-Sun
Select an **entrée** plus a **main** course from the daily menu and receive a complimentary glass of Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylors Pass Chardonnay 2006

WELLINGTON
Ambeli
Dinner Tues-Sat $65
Entrée Chorizo flamed in Amontillado Sherry, butter beans, peppers & parsley oil with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008
Main Lasagne of goat, Jerusalem artichokes & mushrooms with Villa Maria Reserve Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007

Bisque on Bolton
Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner 7 days $50
Entrée Duck confit, toasted brioche & fig & lemon chutney with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Gris 2009
Main Olive oil poached fish, wakame, shiitake mushrooms & citrus dressing with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Gewürztraminer 2008

Gusto Bistro
Lunch Thurs-Fri, dinner Tues-Sun $62.50
Entrée Smoked eel, potato, leek, horseradish & pancetta with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Gris 2009
Main Beef cheek, celeriac, mushroom, snail & black truffle butter with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005

Martin Bosley's
Lunch Mon-Fri $95
Entrée Trio of tartare: snapper, pine nut, raisin, pickled potato & burnt onion; salmon, smoked sushi rice & soy ginger gelée; tuna, roasted beetroot, buffalo yoghurt & sumac with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Southern Clays Sauvignon Blanc 2009
Main Roasted fish, brussels sprouts, chestnut pudding, Jerusalem artichoke ice-cream & maple bacon powder with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Chardonnay 2007 OR Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylors Pass Pinot Noir 2006

Matterhorn
Lunch & dinner 7 days $58
Entrée Carpaccio of yellowtail kingfish, grapefruit, shaved rhubarb, ginger buckwheat & radish shoots with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008
Main Wagyu skirt, roast shallots, celeriac, red wine sauce & parsley salad with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Merlot 2005

Ortega Fish Shack & Bar
Dinner Mon-Sat $65
Entrée Sautéed squid & pork sausage, sweet potato & chipotle oil with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Omahu Gravels Viognier 2007
Main Pan-roasted gurnard, beetroot & chickpea salad, & green coconut chutney with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008

Red Ginger
Lunch & dinner Tues-Sun $55
Entrée Rice paper parcel of steamed prawn & water chestnuts OR minced chicken on lettuce cups with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009
Main Belly of pork & ginger & soy soda noodle salad OR duck two ways, with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007

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NELSON

Bouterey's at 251

Dinner Tues-Sat $80 (without wine $65)

"Trust our Chef" Put yourself in the hands of Matt and his team showcasing the region with a four-course dégustation served with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007 & Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008

Hopgood's Restaurant & Bar

Dinner Mon-Fri $59.50

Entrée Sautéed prawns, hot smoked salmon tortellini, apple & fennel salad, & sorrel cream with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Ihumatao Verdelho 2008

Main Braised beef shin wrapped in bacon, parsnip purée, creamed mushrooms & truffle jus with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007

MARLBOROUGH

Gibb's Vineyard Restaurant

Dinner Tues-Sat (August only) $69

Entrée Panfried fish, risotto & spinach citrus salsa with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Fletcher Riesling 2008

Main Braised veal shank, tomatoes, porcini & silverbeet & pumpkin gnocchi with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005

CHRISTCHURCH

Pescatore

Dinner Tues-Sat $75

Entrée Smoked scallops, black fennel purée, chorizo & confit orange with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Omahu Gravels Viognier 2007

Main Steak, egg & chips: confit 40-day aged fillet, 63°C egg, brown onion purée & bacon mayonnaise with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Syrah 2005

Dessert Hazelnut mousse, peanut butter ice-cream, gold leaf & peanut wafer with Villa Maria Méthode Traditionnelle NV

Restaurant Schwass

Dinner Mon-Thurs $75

Entrée Rabbit tortellini, ruby chard, hazelnuts & lemon ricotta with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Gisborne Viognier 2009

Main Beef sirloin, suet pudding, foraged mushrooms & pine smoke with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah 2007

Saggio di Vino

Dinner 7 days, two courses $49, three courses $69

Entrée Barrel smoked salmon, shaved fennel salad & lemon crème fraîche with Villa Maria Reserve Barrique Fermented Gisborne Chardonnay 2008

Main Duck confit, sweet potato polenta, apple chutney & cinnamon jus with Villa Maria Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah 2007

Dessert Manuka honey & Strega parfait with Villa Maria Reserve Noble Riesling 2009

NORTH OTAGO

Riverstone Kitchen

Dinner Thurs-Sun $85

Entrée Goat's curd tart, red onion jam & salad greens with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Southern Clays Sauvignon Blanc 2009

Main Venison, fondant potatoes, red cabbage & roasted hazelnuts with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Dessert Passionfruit soufflé, curd & sorbet with Villa Maria Reserve Noble Riesling 2009

DUNEDIN

Plato

Dinner 7 days $60

Entrée Sautéed muttonbird, fennel gnocchi & shredded apple salad with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Gisborne Viognier 2009

Main Thyme-scented pork fillet, kumara rösti, chargrilled spring onions & quince jam with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009

Two Chefs Bistro

Dinner 7 days $69

Entrée Baked squid stuffed with bacon, capsicum & herbs, sauté of fennel bulb & Spanish aïoli with Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009

Main Roasted venison rack, yam & goat's cheese fritter, wilted spinach, Pedro Ximénez Sherry & raisin sauce with Villa Maria Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

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MEDIUM RAW

Anthony Bourdain, Allen & Unwin, p/b, $39.99

Medium Raw continues where the drug- and alcohol-riddled memoirs of *Kitchen Confidential* left off. That notorious title assured Bourdain's culinary fame and, although he is now cleaned up, conscious and relishing life again with the benefit of hindsight, he continues here to trade heavily on the lapses and plain stupidity of his earlier career.

But for all that and, again, the regular appearance of blue language and subject matter, Bourdain presents an interesting mix of biography, gourmet gossip and comment on attitudes to food, eating and anything that captures his restless interest. How the big-city restaurant scene operates, why multimillionaire chefs endorse sandwich grillers, what we might do to promote more sustainable and equitable food consumption, or what drives Gordon Ramsay – you'll find plenty of opinion directly expressed. Bourdain entertainingly transmits his interest in the food of his own culture and is infectiously excited by good food anywhere. He ranges widely, with colourful, lively prose and convincing dialogue, and he has a fine sense of the absurd. There are plenty of nuggets among the muck, but I'd be surprised if it appealed to a vast readership.

JENNY MAIDMENT

GOURMET FOOD ON A BUDGET

Jason Atherton, Quadrille, p/b, $39.99

Jason Atherton recently departed the Michelin-starred Maze to set up his own London restaurant and, where Maze dazzled with modern fusion, it is rumoured his new venture is going to reflect his love of Spanish tapas and small plates – although, given his background (including a stint at El Bulli), this will probably be a step above a basic tapas bar.

And these are a step above your basic budget meals. Through the book are great tips and the recipes range from simple throw-together starters, more intricate dishes and glamorous desserts – all beautifully photographed. Most of the recipes are made with readily available ingredients, often using cheaper fish and cuts of meat (for British consumers) and are very achievable at home. **GINNY GRANT**

MORNING NOON AND NIGHT: FLORIDITAS CAFÉ RESTAURANT & BAKERY

Julie Clark and Marc Weir, Phantom, h/b, $49.95

I've had many memorable meals at Wellington's Floriditas. I love their well-considered, simple menu, homemade relishes, cordials and conserves, and fabulous, effortless service.

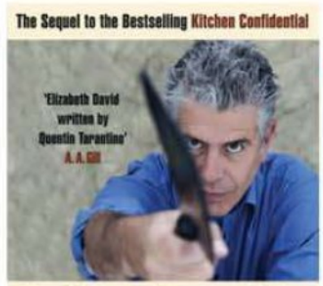
The title nods towards their opening hours – from breakfast to dinner – and the recipes, too, range through the day: from fruit salads or the luscious-sounding porridge with Pedro Ximénez raisins for the early hours to seasonal salads and vibrant mains later on. This is a very accessible cookbook – recipes, for instance, are arranged seasonally – that lets you create beautiful food using mostly simple techniques. It could have done with a better edit (the roast chicken recipe has gone awol) but this is a fine effort – if only it included the recipe for their fantastic raspberry jam. **GINNY GRANT**

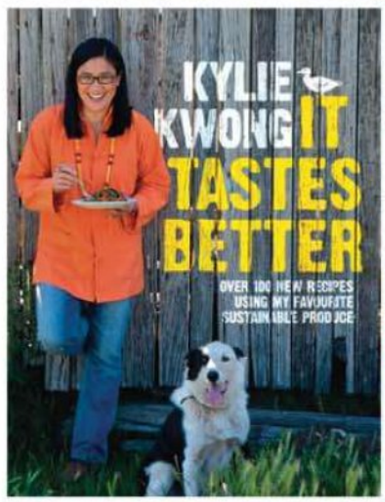
MOLTO GUSTO

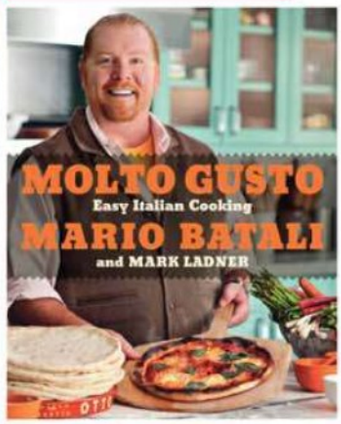
Mario Batali, Harper Collins, h/b, $54.99

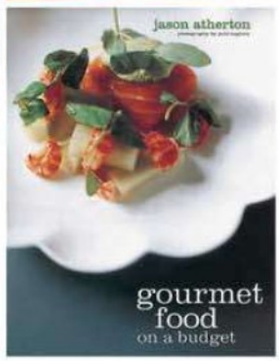
The Iron Chef with the penchant for orange Crocs has packed the flavours and foods of his New York pizzeria and enoteca, Otto, into this latest book. The food is light with no mains as such. Most dishes are easy to prepare with a few choice ingredients – those that are not readily available can usually be replaced. The vegetable dishes – the book's mainstay, as antipasti, in salads and pastas or as toppings for pizza – are a revelation.

The gelati section also looks delicious. The standards are usually given a little twist and there are some intriguing ones to try (sweetcorn gelato and an eggless ricotta gelato). This is definitely one of Batali's better books, with some inspiring recipes. **GINNY GRANT**









IT TASTES BETTER: OVER 100 NEW RECIPES USING MY FAVOURITE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCE

Kylie Kwong, Penguin, h/b, $75

Since 2004, Kylie Kwong's restaurant Billy Kwong – a perennial Sydney favourite – has been dedicated to using locally grown, organic and biodynamic food. This weighty book (450 pages) is a celebration of the Australian producers whose food she loves. It is divided into chapters devoted to each artisan, including fishermen, pig breeders, cheesemakers, poultry farmers and biodynamic winemakers. Kwong starts with an engaging yarn about each, followed by recipes using their food. Of course, using that exact produce isn't necessary to enjoy her wonderful, fuss-free recipes.

Her recipes are mostly Asian influenced, but there is a spread of others, from roast chook with preserved lemon and tarragon butter; beetroot, fig, yoghurt and cumin salad, and even her mum's pav. And Billy Kwong junkies will be happy to know her signature duck with citrus sauce features, too. Beautifully illustrated, it's packed with photographs of the rural scenes, the producers and food, as it charts Kwong's journey around the country. **SARAH NICHOLSON**

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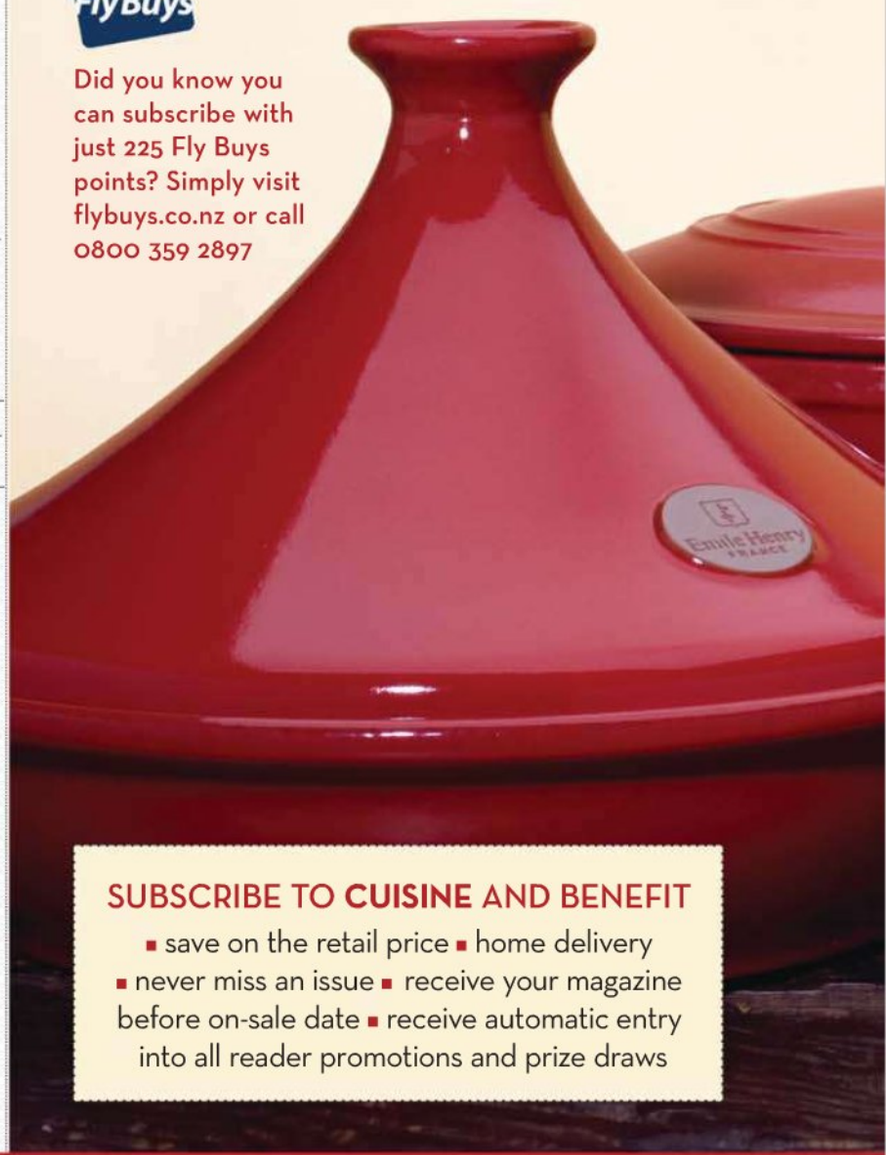

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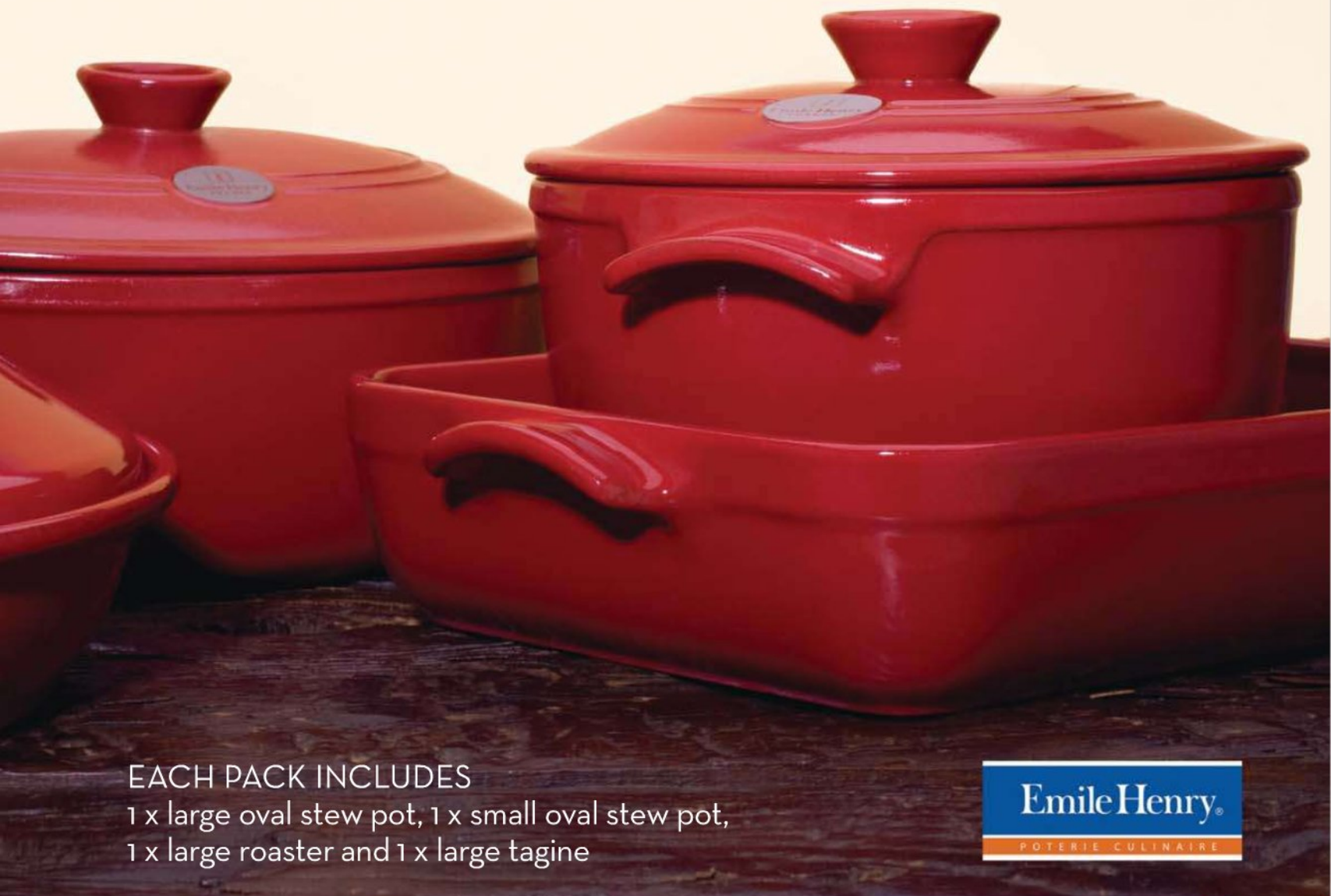

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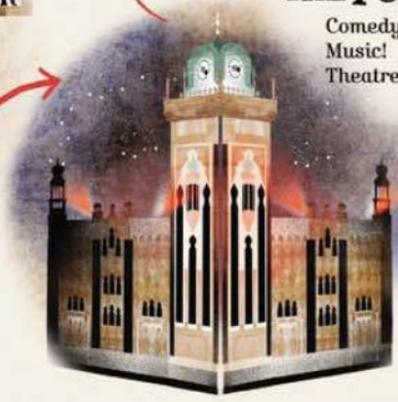

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food

PHOTOGRAPH KIERAN SCOTT

AL BROWN'S PUDDINGS
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colloquial french

Cheerful bistro food is a cinch to create in your own kitchen, says **Ginny Grant**

The idea of French bistro conjures up visions of uncomplicated, flavoursome food served with a generosity of spirit and bonhomie. The ingredients are familiar and readily available, and all served family style on platters or bowls without unnecessary garnish. The slow braises and stews that follow here reflect that essence of bistro style and, while I offer serving suggestions, in most cases a salad of green leaves such as rocket, watercress or cos would be a fitting finish (and possibly also help to mop up some of those delicious juices). These are classics – in both flavour and methods – that you'll go back to time and again.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY GINNY GRANT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON McLEAN
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

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CURED & BRAISED PORK BELLY WITH LENTILS

SERVES 6-8

Originally a preserving technique, salting the meat the day before helps to concentrate the flavours. You need to start the dish the day before you plan on serving it. Serve with a Grenache blend or sturdy Syrah.

6 whole cloves
½ cup sea salt
¼ cup brown sugar
1.3kg boned pork belly, skin on
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 carrots, peeled and finely diced
1 stick celery, finely diced
2 bay leaves
½ cup white wine
1 litre chicken stock
1 cup lentils (I used Montebello)
small handful flat-leafed parsley, finely chopped

Place the cloves in a mortar, add a little of the sea salt and grind to a powder with the pestle. Mix with the remaining salt and the brown sugar.

Put the pork in a non-reactive oven dish then massage all over with the salt and sugar mix. Place skin side up, cover and refrigerate overnight.

Rinse the pork thoroughly. Place in a large saucepan with cold water to cover and bring to a gentle simmer for 5 minutes. Drain off the liquid and set the pork aside.

In a large saucepan heat the oil and add the onion, carrots, celery and bay leaves, and sauté until soft. Return the pork to the saucepan, add the wine and bring to the boil then add the stock (add more if necessary to just cover the pork). Cover with a cartouche (a round of baking paper that sits on the surface of the stew) and tight-fitting lid. Simmer gently for 1½ hours (this can also be cooked in the oven at 160°C).

Remove the pork and keep warm while you prepare the lentils. Add the lentils to the saucepan and simmer until tender (30-40 minutes). Add more stock or water if necessary. Finish by adding the parsley.

Slice the pork and serve with the lentils. The pork keeps well and this dish can be made ahead and reheated.

BRAISED CHICKEN WITH RED WINE VINEGAR

SERVES 4-6

With its sweet and sour notes, this dish is more than the sum of its parts. I can't stress enough the importance of using good-quality vinegar. I served this with wide noodles, but a potato gratin would do nicely with a rocket salad. Match with a fruity Pinot Noir.

40g butter
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 chicken (about 1.3kg), jointed into 8 pieces (or use 4 drumsticks and 4 thighs)
salt and freshly ground black pepper
200ml good-quality red wine vinegar (I used Forum)
100ml tomato passata
250ml chicken stock

Heat half the butter and the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Pat the chicken dry and season with salt and pepper. Add the pieces to the pan, skin side down, and brown all over. Do this in batches if necessary.

Remove the chicken from the pan and drain off the fat. Return the chicken to the pan and add the red wine vinegar. Simmer over a high heat to reduce by half then add the tomato passata and stock. Bring to the boil then lower the heat, cover with a lid and cook for 20 minutes (if using a whole chicken you may want to remove the breast pieces

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BRAISED CHICKEN WITH RED WINE VINEGAR

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The slow braises and stews that follow reflect the essence of bistro style. These are classics – in both flavour and methods – that you'll go back to time and again

after 15 minutes to ensure they don't dry out). Remove the chicken from the pan and place in a warmed serving dish. Simmer the sauce to reduce until thick then stir through the remaining butter at the last minute. Pour the sauce over the chicken and serve immediately.

LAMB SHOULDER CHOPS

SERVES 4-6

Lamb shoulder chops suffer from a poor reputation. People often find them too fatty or the bones annoying, although I suspect the latter is because we have become accustomed to seeing meat as sanitised protein without any regard for where it comes from. Meat cooked slowly like this is sweet, succulent and delicious (and will fall off the bone), and great with a robust Cabernet Sauvignon.

6 lamb shoulder chops
2 teaspoons flour, plus extra for dusting
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
12 shallots, peeled
thickly sliced zest and juice of 1 lemon
few sprigs thyme
½ cup white wine
2 cups lamb or chicken stock
½ cup black olives
30g butter

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Dust the lamb in flour that has been well seasoned with sea salt and pepper.

Heat a casserole over a medium heat and add the oil. Brown the shoulder chops (you will need to do this in batches). Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add the shallots to the pan and brown a little then add the lemon zest strips and thyme, and sauté for a few minutes. Return the lamb to the casserole, add the wine and bring to the boil. Add the stock and the olives. Bring to the boil, cover with the lid and place in the oven.

Cook for 1½ hours until the meat is falling off the bone. Carefully remove the lamb and vegetables, and place in a serving dish. Strain the juices into a small saucepan and skim off any fat. Bring to a gentle simmer.

Rub the butter and 2 teaspoons of flour together then drop small pieces into the sauce and whisk until it thickens slightly. Add some lemon juice to taste.

Pour the sauce over the lamb and serve immediately. This is delicious with mashed potatoes.

BEEF CHEEKS WITH ORANGE & BABY CARROTS

SERVES 6-8

Beef cheeks are a very economical cut – even though you need to trim off a lot of fat and silver skin – and have great flavour and texture when slow cooked. You need to order them from the butcher. Beef rump or chuck would also work well here. Serve with a potato or celeriac mash, or gnocchi tossed with butter and chives. Try with a meaty Shiraz.

¼ cup flour
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2kg beef cheeks, excess fat and silver skin removed (about 1.3kg trimmed)
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 carrots, peeled and finely diced
1 stick celery, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 bay leaves
zest of 1 orange, cut into thick strips
1 cup red wine
500ml beef stock
250g-300g baby carrots, washed and trimmed (but not peeled)

Season the flour generously with salt and pepper then dust the beef cheeks with the flour. Heat half the oil in a

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LAMB SHOULDER CHOPS

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BEEF CHEEKS WITH
ORANGE & BABY CARROTS

large casserole. Brown the beef on both sides (do this in batches if necessary) over a medium high heat until a rich brown colour. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add the remaining oil to the pan. When hot, add the onion, carrots and celery and sauté gently until soft. Add the garlic, bay leaves and orange zest, and cook for a few more minutes.

Return the beef to the pan, add the red wine and bring to the boil. Add the stock, bring back to the boil then lower the heat. Cover with a cartouche (a round of baking paper that sits on the surface of the stew) then cover with a tight-fitting lid. Simmer slowly for 2-2½ hours or until the meat is tender (if you prefer this can be cooked in the oven at 160°C).

If you wish, this dish can be made ahead and reheated. About 10 minutes before serving add the trimmed carrots to the casserole and cook until tender. Taste and season.

SEAFOOD, FENNEL & WHITE BEAN STEW

SERVES 4

Potatoes are usually found in this style of dish, but white beans also work well. Vary the seafood to what is available. I use firmer-fleshed fish in stews – delicate fish can fall apart. Oysters add a luxurious element, but can be omitted, and pipi or clams could be used instead of mussels. Serve with crusty bread followed by a salad, and a drier style of Sauvignon Blanc or a flinty Chardonnay.

pinch of saffron threads
½ cup dry white wine
12 mussels, scrubbed and debearded
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 bulbs fennel, outer leaves removed, fronds chopped and reserved, bulb cut into thin wedges
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 small dried chilli, crumbled
2 cups chicken stock
2 x 400g cans white beans (such as cannellini), drained and rinsed
400g firm-fleshed fish (like monkfish, hapuku, lemon fish), cut into large pieces
sea salt to taste
12 shucked oysters, juices reserved (optional)
chopped flat-leafed parsley to garnish

Soak the saffron in 2 tablespoons of boiling water for 20 minutes. Heat a large saucepan and add the wine and mussels. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and cook for a few minutes until the mussels have just opened. Sieve and reserve the wine and mussel juices. Discard any mussels that haven't opened. When cool enough to handle, remove the mussels from the shells, discard the tongues and chop the flesh into 2 (or 3 if large). Set aside.

Heat a large saucepan over medium heat and add the oil. When hot, add the fennel and onion, and fry until soft and golden. Add the garlic, chilli and saffron with its soaking water then cook for a few minutes. Add the mussel juices and stock. Bring to the boil, add half the beans and simmer for 15 minutes. Purée the remaining beans with a little of the stew liquid and add to the stew.

Season the fish with salt, add to the stew and cook for 4-5 minutes until just cooked. Add the oysters in the last minute. Taste and adjust seasoning. Add the parsley and fennel fronds. Serve in warmed shallow bowls.

Credits: iittala decanter, Royal Porcelain Adama plates, Rosenthal Jade pasta bowl and Hemstitch napkins from The Studio of Tableware; wooden table from Cranfields; tiles from Haunt Antiques; stool from Charbon; antique cutlery, marble pepper mill, silver-plated salt and pepper shakers and green glass bowl from Antiques of Epsom; background paint specially mixed by Aalto Colour. For full details, see Credits Index.

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SEAFOOD, FENNEL
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SAVE ROOM FOR PUD

Blessed are those born with a sweet tooth, says **Al Brown**

APPLE PIE WITH MAPLE & CINNAMON MASCARPONE
recipe page 68

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PRUNE & ARMAGNAC TART
recipe page 70

RECIPES AND FOOD
STYLING BY AL BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
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As a chef, I enjoy most foods that have been thoughtfully prepared and intelligently cooked. However, for me personally, there is no more satisfaction or pleasure to be had in the world of good food than that of a great dessert.

Desserts can be broken down into two categories: restaurant-calibre works of edible art, made by talented pastry chefs who spend their entire day preparing sweet and extremely delicate components, painstakingly put together on the plate with the skill of a neurosurgeon; and second, easily my favourite, is that of a homemade pudding, more than likely copied from a grease-stained piece of notepaper that lives tucked inside the *Edmonds Cookery Book* along with a dozen or so other generational family favourites.

The word "pudding" is a wonderful culinary term that conjures up all sorts of childhood memories and delights. It's the simplicity and uncomplicated nature of a lovingly made pud served in small, deep bowls accompanied with warm silky custard or a dollop of perfectly whipped cream that can get the eyes rolling back in my head.

One of the great things about puddings is the ability to freestyle with different flavours and ingredients. Keep in mind the seasonality of fruits, different textures and the combination of hot and cold. The following are mostly simple "classics" with a little twist here and there. They are generous in size by design, as I have always felt one of life's greatest treats is cold pud for breakfast!

ESPRESSO & CHOCOLATE BRIOCHE PUDDING WITH COINTREAU CHOCOLATE SAUCE

SERVES 6

This is a great variation on a classic bread pudding, which I have always enjoyed, but have sometimes found pretty heavy going. Using brioche lightens this dessert up considerably. And espresso, chocolate and Cointreau – that all works!

Espresso & Chocolate Brioche Pudding

1 regular-sized brioche loaf
2½ cups cream, plus extra for serving, whipped
¾ cup full-cream milk
1¼ cups sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
5 tablespoons ground coffee (plunger grind)
5 eggs
3 egg yolks
80g good-quality dark chocolate, coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons brown sugar

Preheat the oven to 180° C.

Cut the brioche loaf into small pieces about 2cm square.

Pour the cream into a saucepan along with the milk, sugar, vanilla and ground coffee. Place on low heat. Bring to a simmer, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Turn off the heat and let the cream and coffee infuse for 10 minutes.

Strain the cream and coffee mix through a very fine sieve lined with a muslin cloth or similar. Discard the coffee grounds.

In a separate medium bowl whisk the whole eggs and yolks. Continue to whisk as you slowly add the hot coffee cream a little at a time until all incorporated.

To assemble, take a square ovenproof dish about 24cm long and 6cm high. Add enough of the diced brioche to cover the base of the dish. Sprinkle some of the chopped chocolate over then pour the coffee custard over to cover.

Repeat the layering process 3 times until all the brioche, chocolate and custard mix are used up. Sprinkle the brown sugar over the top.

Place the pudding in the centre of the oven and check after 35-40 minutes. The pudding is ready when the custard is set and a sharp knife comes out clean when inserted into the centre.

Cointreau Chocolate Sauce

220g good-quality dark chocolate, coarsely chopped
¾ cup cream
⅓ cup Cointreau

Place all the ingredients in a bowl then put the bowl over a saucepan with a small amount of water in the bottom. Place the saucepan over medium heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until the chocolate is melted and you have a silky smooth sauce. Keep warm until required or refrigerate until needed.

Spoon out the hot brioche pudding into warm bowls. Pour the chocolate sauce over and add lashings of whipped cream. Serve now.

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There is no more satisfaction or pleasure to be had in the world of good food than that of a great dessert

ESPRESSO & CHOCOLATE BRIOCHE PUDDING WITH COINTREAU CHOCOLATE SAUCE

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Apple Pie with Maple & Cinnamon Mascarpone

APPLE PIE WITH MAPLE & CINNAMON MASCARPONE

SERVES 6-8

This apple pie recipe has been lovingly passed on to me by a wonderful friend of mine, Eve Reilly, who runs Poronui (see my feature in issue 140), having been passed on by her Irish mother. It is the one dish I insist Eve makes for me whenever I am lucky enough to visit. What makes it so perfect is its simplicity – great apples and a perfect pastry. I usually serve it with a dollop of vanilla ice-cream and runny cream, but I've zhooshed it up ever so slightly with the maple and cinnamon mascarpone.

Maple & Cinnamon Mascarpone

250g mascarpone
3 tablespoons maple syrup
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Place all the ingredients in a small mixing bowl and whisk gently until combined. Chill until required.

For the pastry

340g flour, plus extra for dusting
225g butter, cut into 1cm cubes
pinch of salt
½ cup cold water
1 egg yolk

Sift the flour into a large bowl then add the butter and salt. With clean, cold hands rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles chunky breadcrumbs. Do not overwork – there should be plenty of visible pieces of butter.

Place the cold water and egg yolk in a small bowl and whisk lightly until combined then add to the flour and mix through until a dough forms. Again, do not overwork the pastry – just enough that it comes together.

Cut the pastry in half, cover with plastic wrap and rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Dust the bench liberally with flour. Roll out both pieces of pastry until about 5mm thick. Cut out the pastry for the base to fit a 28cm-diameter flan tin, with a couple of centimetres overhang for crimping with the top. Place in the tin, pushing into the edges so it sits snugly.

For the filling

6 large cooking apples (such as Granny Smith or Braeburn), peeled, quartered and cored
¾ cup caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons flour
25g butter, cut into small cubes
milk for brushing

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Slice each apple quarter into 4-5 slices and place in a medium mixing bowl. Add the caster sugar, lemon juice, flour and butter, and mix until combined. Tip the filling into the pastry shell.

Brush the edge of the pastry base with a little milk then cut the second piece of pastry slightly larger than the pie shell. Place on top of the apples and carefully crimp the edges together. Make 4 small cuts in the centre of the pastry lid for steam vents. Brush the pie top with milk and sprinkle with caster sugar.

Bake the pie for 40-50 minutes or until the pastry is golden and crisp. Place on a cooling rack or windowsill and allow to cool slightly.

To serve, slice generous wedges of pie and place on warm plates. Finish with a dollop of the maple and cinnamon mascarpone.

RHUBARB & DATE CRUMBLE

SERVES 6-8

For me, the word "crumble" evokes good and bad memories. At boarding school we had "apple crumble". I recall it vividly, dry and tasteless as cardboard and served with a glug of powdered custard – a mouthful of all the components was like eating paper mâché. I have since fallen in love with many variations of the fruit-based crumble, one of the great comfort puddings of all time. The following is my latest and greatest. It has a terrific balance of acidity verses sweetness.

For the rhubarb

600g rhubarb, cut into 2cm pieces
3 large apples, peeled, cored and cut into 2cm pieces
½ cup apple juice
1 cup pitted dates, halved
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Place all the ingredients in a large saucepan, mix together and place on medium-high heat. Simmer for about 15 minutes until the fruit just starts to break down. Pour into your favourite ovenproof dish. The fruit should be 3cm-4cm deep in the base.

For the crumble

¾ cup rolled oats
½ cup soft brown sugar
¾ cup flour
1 cup roasted unsalted macadamias, coarsely chopped
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
100g unsalted butter, cut into 1cm cubes
300ml cream, whipped to soft peaks

Place all the ingredients except the cream in a large mixing bowl. Rub together by hand until the mixture begins to come together, but is still quite coarse. There should be no visible chunks of butter. Spoon the crumble evenly over the rhubarb mix then refrigerate until required.

Preheat the oven to 200°C then bake the crumble for 20 minutes or until the topping is golden and crisp. Dish out the crumble into bowls and serve with lashings of whipped cream.

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PRUNE & ARMAGNAC TART

SERVES 6-8

The words "posh" and "tart", I suspect, are rarely used in the same sentence. However, that's exactly how I would describe this wonderful dessert.

Sweet Pastry

125g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
100g caster sugar
1 egg
250g flour, plus extra for dusting

In a medium bowl, beat the butter and sugar together until pale. Mix in the egg then lightly mix in the flour until a dough forms. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until required.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Butter a 28cm-diameter x 3cm-deep flan tin. Cut out a circle of baking paper to fit the base.

On a lightly floured bench, roll the pastry out to a 5mm-thick round, gently place in the flan tin and press into the edges. Using a knife, trim the excess pastry from the lip of the tin. Rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to prevent the pastry from shrinking when baked.

Place the baking paper in the pastry shell, weight with beans or rice and blind bake for 20 minutes until slightly golden. Remove the paper and beans, reduce the oven to 150°C and bake until the base is cooked and crisp (about 10 minutes). Remove from the oven and cool.

For the filling

1½ cups pitted prunes, halved
1 cup armagnac (you can substitute cognac or brandy if you prefer)
¼ cup fresh orange juice
⅔ cup sugar
800ml cream
4 egg yolks
1 egg

In a small saucepan, bring the prunes, ¾ cup of the armagnac, the orange juice and 2 tablespoons of the sugar to the boil. Reduce to a low heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Place 500ml of the cream and the remaining sugar in a small saucepan. Place on low heat until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly.

Place the egg yolks and whole egg in a large bowl. Whisk to combine. Add the hot cream gradually to the eggs while whisking, pouring very slowly so the egg doesn't cook. Stir in the remaining armagnac. Set aside.

Strain the prunes, reserving the syrup, and scatter them over the cooled pastry case. Pour the custard carefully over the prunes to fill the case. Bake at 150°C until the custard is set (35-40 minutes) but still slightly nervous in the centre when shaken. Remove from the oven and cool then refrigerate.

Serve wedges of the tart with a drizzle of prune syrup and a dollop of the remaining cream whipped.

APRICOT & PEAR COBBLER WITH POIRE WILLIAMS PARFAIT

SERVES 6-8

I became enamoured with cobblers while living and working in North America. Similar in style to our crumble, cobblers can be made with all sorts of fruit. What I love about them is the topping – sort of a cross between a scone and sponge. Apricot and pear is a terrific combination and the parfait made with Poire Williams pear brandy adds a grown-up touch.

Poire Williams Parfait

70g sugar
70ml water
3 egg yolks
¼ teaspoon vanilla paste
200ml cream
100ml Poire Williams pear brandy

Place the sugar and water in a small saucepan. Bring to the boil over high heat and cook rapidly for 5 minutes then remove. Keep hot.

Place the egg yolks and vanilla in the bowl of a cake mixer with the whisk attachment on and whisk until pale and doubled in size. Gradually pour in the hot syrup while whisking vigorously. Keep whisking until the mixture doubles in size and becomes thick and fluffy. Set aside to cool.

In a separate bowl, beat the cream to soft peaks. Gently fold the cream into the egg mixture until combined. Pour the Poire Williams into the bowl and stir through gently. Place the parfait in a covered container and freeze until required (at least 5 hours).

For the apricots

200g dried New Zealand apricots
1 cup white wine
¾ cup water
⅓ cup sugar
1 vanilla bean

Place all the ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a gentle simmer then reduce to a low heat and cook for 20-30 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool. Set aside.

For the topping

2 cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
¼ cup sugar
pinch of salt
75g butter, cut into small cubes
1 cup cream, plus extra for brushing
4 pears, peeled, quartered and cored
3 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons sugar mixed with 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Sift the flour and baking powder into a large mixing bowl. Add the sugar, salt and butter, and rub in the butter until the mix resembles coarse meal. With a light touch, stir in the cream to make a soft dough. Reserve.

Slice the pear quarters into 3, mix with the reserved apricots and the flour then place in an ovenproof dish.

Take the cobbler dough and randomly pull off large pieces and place on top of the pear and apricot mix. Brush the dough lightly with a little cream. Sprinkle the sugar and cinnamon mixture over the top. Bake for 25-30 minutes until the top is golden and crisp.

Spoon out generous amounts of cobbler into bowls and serve a scoop of parfait next to each portion. Consume with abandon.

Credits: Plates supplied by Furnish Home Design. For full details, see Credits Index.

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APRICOT & PEAR COBBLER WITH
POIRE WILLIAMS PARFAIT

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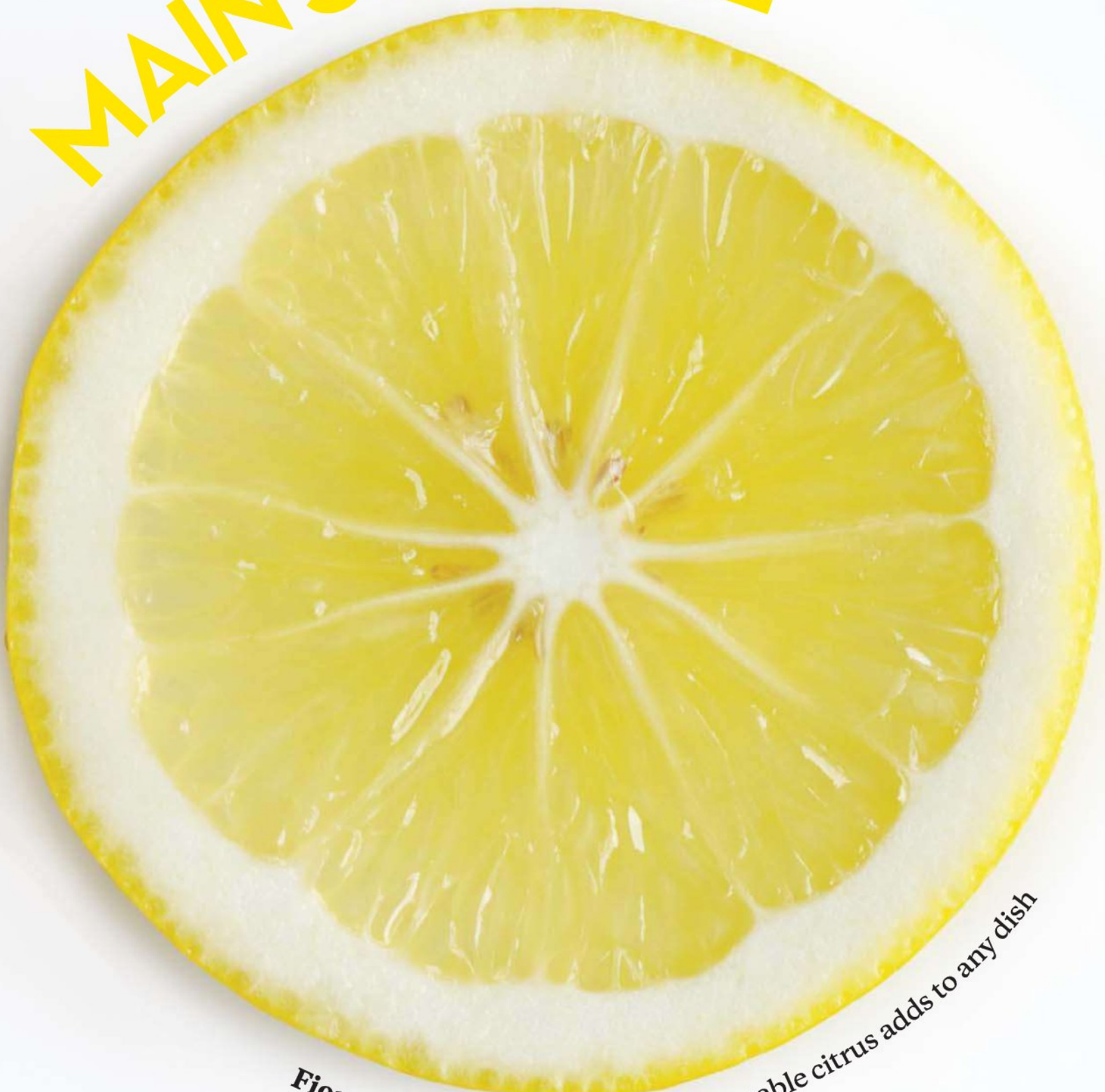
MAIN SQUEEZE



Fiona Smith loves the zing indispensable citrus adds to any dish

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ORANGE & CHOCOLATE CAKE
recipe page 78

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY FIONA SMITH / PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON McLEAN / STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

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TWO OF MY FAVOURITE KITCHEN TOOLS ARE MY MICROPLANE AND ZESTER. I SHOULD PROBABLY ADD JUICER, TOO.

This is because the zing of citrus zest or juice adds so much to a dish that a lemon or lime in the fruit bowl is essential in any home. One of my favourite ways to have green vegetables such as broccoli, spinach and zucchini is steamed and served with a sprinkling of salt, black pepper, extra virgin olive oil and a good squeeze of lemon. And in the depths of winter there is something uplifting about citrus fruit – Mediterranean lemons, Seville oranges, Thai limes all transport you to balmier climes.

SUCK IT AND SEE

Thought to have originated in northern India, the lemon has spread widely across the world, establishing itself as the most important culinary citrus.

A number of varieties are available here in New Zealand, with Meyer, Yen Ben and Villafranca the most readily available.

EUREKA large, thick-skinned fruit with sour juice. Fruits year round but more heavily in summer.

GENOA a Eureka type with sharp flavour and fruiting mostly in summer.

LISBON sharp-flavoured fruit, more available winter and spring.

MEYER a hybrid of lemon and either orange or mandarin, therefore sweeter and not as sharp as "true" lemons. Very juicy and great for drinks, preserving and other uses where you don't need acidity and a sharp lemon flavour. Fruits year round.

VILLAFRANCA similar to Eureka and Lisbon, but with less juice. Heaviest fruiting in winter.

YEN BEN a variety of Lisbon lemon with a reasonably thin skin, no pips and a sharp flavour. More readily available in winter from June.

FRAGRANT LIME & FISH SOUP

SERVES 6 AS AN ENTRÉE

Leatherjacket is readily available at the market and cheap. It is also sold as cream fish. It's great steamed and in soups as it is delicate yet holds together. You can replace it with any medium to firm white fish. Serve as a light entrée or make it more of a meal for four by adding rice or noodles.

1 tablespoon peanut oil
3 cloves garlic, sliced
4cm piece ginger, sliced
zest of 2 limes
4 shallots, chopped
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ cup dried shrimps (available from Asian stores)
1.5kg fish bones and heads from white fish (have the fishmonger clean them)
4-6 large mild chillies, sliced
2 tablespoons sugar
8 leatherjacket (about 800g), skinned and heads removed
60ml fresh lime juice
3 tablespoons fish sauce
4 spring onions, finely sliced
½ cup coriander or Thai basil leaves
¼ cup Vietnamese or English mint leaves, torn

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat, add the garlic, ginger, lime zest, shallots and turmeric, and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the dried shrimp and fish bones, and sauté for another 5 minutes. Cover with 2 litres of water and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes, skimming occasionally.

Strain through a clean cloth or fine strainer into a saucepan with a steamer or that fits a bamboo steamer. Add the chillies and sugar, and heat to a steady simmer. Place the fish in the steamer and set over the stock. Steam, covered for 5 minutes, turn over and cook another 3-4 minutes until just cooked through.

Set aside to cool slightly then cut the flesh from the bones, taking care to discard the fine bones near the head. Add the flesh back to the stock with the lime juice, fish sauce and spring onions. Serve in heated soup bowls and top with the fresh herbs.

TANGELO & MAPLE GLAZED PORK WITH SAGE MASH

SERVES 6

You need to order pork scotch fillet from the butcher, but this can also be made with regular pork fillets. You can use orange instead of the tangelo.

500ml fresh tangelo juice
zest of 2 tangelos
1 onion, cut into wedges
2 cloves garlic, peeled
1 bay leaf
100ml maple syrup
1.2kg pork scotch fillet
salt and freshly ground black pepper
6 medium floury potatoes, peeled and halved
50g unsalted butter
½ cup loosely packed sage leaves
½ cup milk

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Because the zing of citrus zest or juice adds so much to a dish, a lemon or lime in the fruit bowl is essential in any home

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TANGELO & MAPLE GLAZED PORK WITH SAGE MASH

For the marinade, put the tangelo juice and zest, onion, garlic and bay leaf in a medium saucepan and bring to the boil. Boil for 15 minutes then strain through a sieve, pushing a little of the softened onion and garlic through with the back of a fork. Cool then combine with the maple syrup.

Place the pork in a dish that holds it snugly and pour the marinade over. Marinate at room temperature for 2 hours or in the fridge overnight, turning occasionally.

Heat the oven to 170°C for scotch fillet and 200°C for regular fillets.

Place the pork on a roasting dish, season with salt and pepper then pour the marinade over and roast for 70-80 minutes for scotch (30 minutes per 500g), basting with marinade occasionally, and 10-15 minutes for regular fillets (the longer times are for larger pieces of meat or if you like your pork well cooked).

Remove from the oven and rest, covered, for 10-15 minutes. If the marinade is not brown and sticky, raise the oven temperature to 200°C and place the marinade back in the oven for 5-10 minutes to caramelise, stirring occasionally. Brush the marinade over the resting pork.

Boil the potatoes for about 25 minutes until soft. Drain. Meanwhile, in a small frying pan, melt the butter over medium heat until bubbling. Add the sage leaves and fry for about 2 minutes until crisp. Set aside. Heat the milk in the saucepan and rice the potatoes straight into the milk or add the potatoes and mash. Stir in the sage butter and salt to taste.

CHICKEN & LEMON BOLOGNESE

SERVES 6

Ragù alla Bolognese is the traditional sauce for pasta from Bologna made with soffritto, meat, wine, stock, milk or cream and tomato (not as much as we use). This white Bolognese follows the classic recipe, cooking the meat in milk to give a sweet, creamy taste, but leaves out any tomato.

4 tablespoons olive oil
4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 medium onions, chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
2 stalks celery, finely chopped
½ cup chopped parsley
1 tablespoon thyme leaves
1kg minced chicken
200ml dry white wine
500ml whole milk
250ml chicken stock
zest of 3 lemons and juice of 2
500g orecchiette or other pasta
200ml cream
150g baby spinach leaves
grated parmesan to serve

Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large saucepan over a medium-low heat and sauté the garlic, onions, carrot, celery, parsley and thyme for 12 minutes until soft but not browned.

Remove from the pan and set aside. Raise the heat to medium-high and add the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil to the pan and fry the mince for about 10 minutes until just browned.

Add the white wine, bring to the boil and cook until the wine has evaporated then add the milk, chicken stock and lemon zest, and return the sautéed vegetable mixture to the pan.

Bring to a low simmer and cook, uncovered, for 1 hour or until the liquid is nearly all evaporated.

Bring a large pan of water to the boil and salt well. Boil the pasta according to the packet instructions until al dente. Drain.

Around 5 minutes before the pasta is cooked, add the lemon juice, cream and spinach to the sauce and heat through.

Serve the pasta topped with the sauce and parmesan on the side.

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CHICKEN & LEMON BOLOGNESE

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ORANGE & CHOCOLATE CAKE

SERVES 12

This is a version of Claudia Roden's famous Middle Eastern orange and almond cake using boiled oranges, but with chocolate for that wonderful chocolate-orange combination.

butter for greasing
2 large or 3 small oranges, washed
325g dark chocolate (70% cocoa or more)
6 eggs
250g ground almonds
250g sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
125ml cream, plus extra to serve

Place the oranges in a saucepan and fill to halfway up the oranges with water. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 2 hours. Drain, cool then cut open and remove the pips. Blend to a pulp in the food processor.

Butter and line a 23cm cake tin with a removable base. Preheat the oven to 190°C. Melt 125g of the chocolate in a bowl over boiling water or in the microwave. Set aside.

In a large bowl beat the eggs. While beating, add the melted chocolate, orange pulp and almonds, sugar and baking powder. Mix well and pour into the prepared tin. Bake for 1 hour until firm to the touch. Cool in the tin before carefully turning out.

Melt the remaining chocolate in a heatproof bowl over boiling water or in the microwave. In a small saucepan (or in the microwave) warm the cream. Remove the melted chocolate from the heat and quickly stir in the cream, stirring until glossy. Cool in the fridge for 10-15 minutes to thicken slightly then spread over the cake.

Serve with whipped cream.

GRAPEFRUIT TART

SERVES 8-10

You can make this tart with any citrus. If using lemon, add 60ml of fresh juice, but with more delicate juices, such as orange, you need to simmer it to intensify the flavour.

For the pastry
1 small (45g-50g) egg
¼ teaspoon vanilla essence
1 teaspoon finely grated grapefruit zest
45g icing sugar
200g flour
¼ teaspoon salt
140g cold unsalted butter, cut into 1.5cm cubes

In a small bowl beat together the egg, vanilla, zest and icing sugar. Put the flour and salt in a food processor fitted with a metal blade and pulse to combine. Scatter the butter evenly over and pulse until barely combined. Pour the egg mixture over and pulse until the mixture is just combined, but not coming together in a ball. Tip the dough on to a lightly floured surface and gently knead until smooth. Press into a wide disc, wrap in greaseproof paper and chill for 30 minutes.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry out to a 35cm round. Slide the base of a 24cm x 3cm-deep loose-bottomed flan tin under the pastry to help you lift it into the tin. Gently fold the pastry into the edge of the tin and press it up the sides, trying not to stretch it. Trim the overhang to 5mm then fold this back into the tin, pressing to form a tidy edge. Prick the base all over with a fork. Place in the freezer for 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 190°C. Line the pastry with baking paper and fill with baking beans. Bake for 15 minutes then remove the baking paper and beans, and bake a further 10 minutes. Cool on a rack.

For the filling
250ml freshly squeezed grapefruit juice (about 3 grapefruit)
3 medium eggs
125g sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
finely grated zest of 1 grapefruit (reserve the grapefruit), plus 1 extra whole grapefruit
150ml cream
50g unsalted butter

Bring the grapefruit juice to the boil in a medium saucepan and boil for around 12 minutes until reduced to about 60ml of juice. Cool.

Put the eggs and sugar in a bowl and whisk until light and creamy. Whisk in the cooled juice and the zest then the cream.

Melt the butter and whisk into the grapefruit mixture. Pour into the cool pastry case. Bake for 15 minutes then reduce the temperature to 160°C and bake a further 15-20 minutes until the filling has set. Cool.

Cut the top and bottom of each grapefruit. Cut away the skin and pith. Carefully slice between each segment and remove the flesh from the membrane. Arrange the segments on top of the tart and sprinkle with a little sugar.

Credits: Thomas Loft White, 24 Hours & Trend plates and bowls, Essence Luminite cake stand, Napoli napkin and WMF Picea cutlery all from The Studio of Tableware; pewter plate from French Country Collections; cake slice and carving knife from Antiques of Epsom. For full details, see Credits Index.

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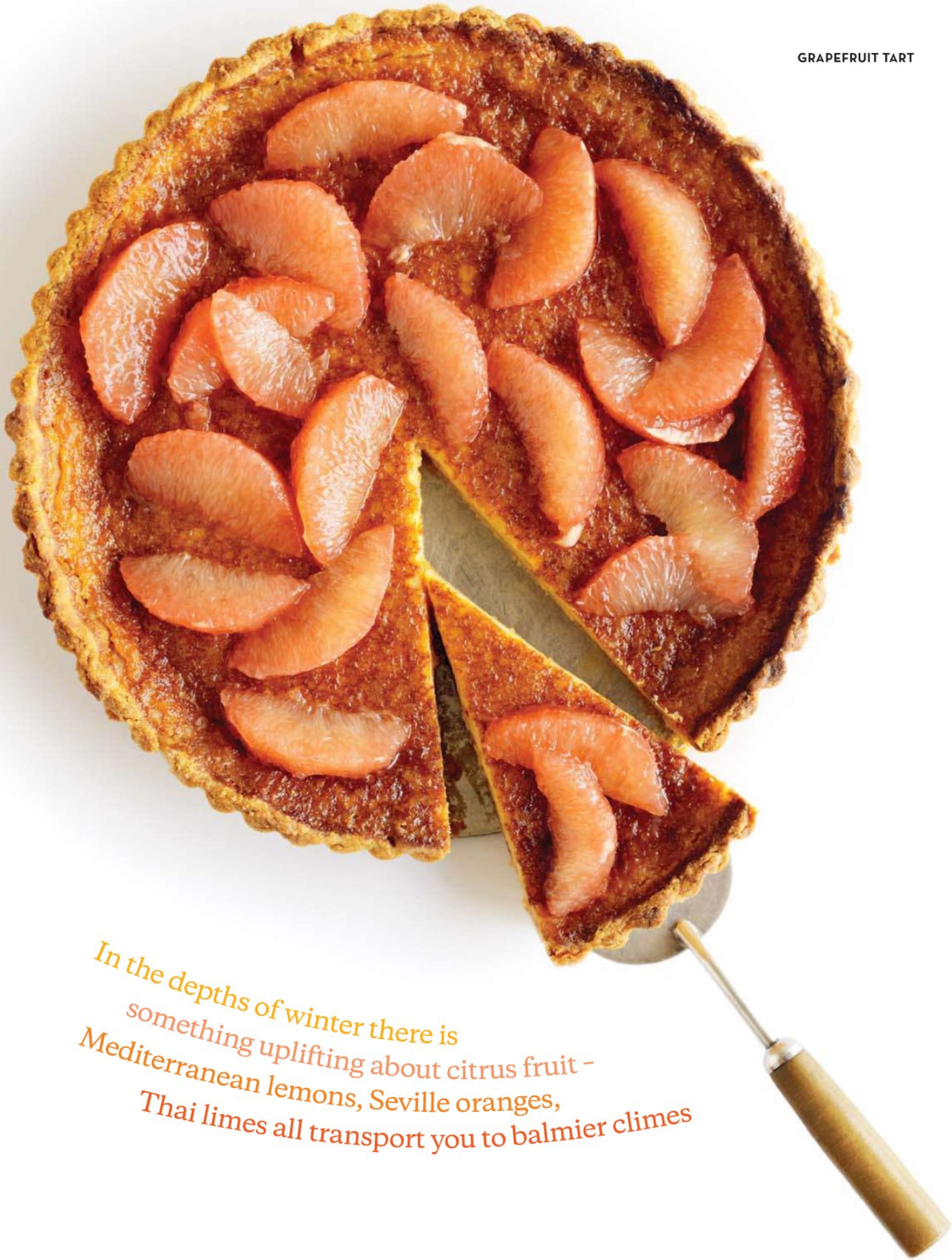

In the depths of winter there is
something uplifting about citrus fruit –
Mediterranean lemons, Seville oranges,
Thai limes all transport you to balmier climes

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SIRLOIN STEAK WITH RED WINE JUS
& WHIPPED ANCHOVY & OLIVE MASH

familial territory

Ray McVinnie makes everyday meals that are neither a chore nor a bore

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY McVINNIE / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT / STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

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PORK WITH BRAISED GREENS IN LEMON SOY BROTH & NOODLES
recipe page 86

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Eating together as a family, in whatever form that takes, is one of life's pleasures. Delicious home-cooked food has a good effect on people. As Oscar Wilde said in his play *A Woman of No Importance*, "After a good dinner, one can forgive anybody, even one's own relations."

People constantly tell me one of the hardest things about cooking for the family is coming up with new ideas. Family meals have to be filling, good for you and not too complicated to prepare. But they should be appetising and not a dreary routine of over-repeated dishes. Not to say you should never repeat a dish – building up a repertoire of favourites is what every cook does, but this should be an ever-expanding repertoire of recipes that change and develop. It is also good to have recipes that can do duty as everyday meals, but are interesting enough to serve to guests, too, as I hope you'll find with these.

MUSSELS & FISH WITH SPINACH & CREAM ON RED POTATOES & RICE

SERVES 4-6

This tastes great because the liquid from the mussels makes a wonderful seafood stock in which to cook the fish. As long as you include mussels, any combination of seafood will work well here instead of or as well as the fish. Match with a steely Chardonnay.

- 4 medium red-skinned all-purpose potatoes (Red Rascals or Desirée), well washed and diced 2cm
- 1 cup well-washed long-grain rice
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 18 live mussels, well scrubbed and debearded
- 1 large sprig fresh thyme
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 150ml dry white wine
- 300ml cream
- 400g skinned, boned firm white fish (I used blue cod), diced 4cm
- 3 handfuls baby spinach leaves
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the potatoes and rice in a saucepan. Add enough water to cover 2cm above the potatoes and rice after they have been mixed, given a shake and levelled off.

Bring to the boil, cover tightly, turn the heat down to the lowest setting and cook, without uncovering for any reason, for 20 minutes. Just before serving, uncover, fluff up the rice with a fork and stir in the butter without mashing the potatoes and rice.

Meanwhile, place the mussels in a wide deep saucepan, and add the thyme, bay leaf and white wine. Bring to the boil, simmer for 1 minute then add the cream.

Bring back to the boil and boil gently until the mussels open and come away from the shells, removing them from the pan as they do. Once all are removed, cover and reserve.

Add the fish to the mussel liquid and bring to the boil. Simmer for 2 minutes until the fish is just cooked then add the spinach and let it wilt.

Return the mussels to the pan, bring to the boil, taste, season and serve on the rice and potatoes.

SIRLOIN STEAK WITH RED WINE JUS & WHIPPED ANCHOVY & OLIVE MASH

SERVES 4-6

This meal – a twist on steak and mash – is inspired by a recipe in Stéphane Reynaud's excellent book on traditional French food, *Ripailles*. Serve with a robust Shiraz.

- 1.2kg peeled Agria or other floury potatoes, cut into 4cm chunks
- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for serving
- 150ml hot milk
- 10 anchovy fillets, chopped
- ½ cup pitted Kalamata olives, chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped parsley
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 900g piece sirloin steak
- 150ml red wine
- 250ml bought beef jus (I use Essential Cuisine)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 handfuls rocket (I use wild rocket)

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Boil the potatoes until tender, drain and put back on the heat to steam dry. Add 3 tablespoons of the oil and the milk, mash everything then whisk until smooth. Stir in the anchovies, olives and parsley, taste and season.

Mix the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil with the garlic and rub all over the sirloin. Season with plenty of freshly ground pepper.

Panfry the steak in an ovenproof frying pan until brown all over. Place the pan in the oven and cook for 10 minutes until rare or longer if you prefer. Remove from the oven, place the sirloin on a plate and let it rest.

Pour the fat from the pan and place it over high heat. Add the wine and let it bubble while scraping the pan with a wooden spoon. Add the jus and boil until slightly syrupy. Stir in the butter. Taste and season.

Slice the sirloin thinly across the grain of the meat, discarding the fat if you desire.

Serve the sliced sirloin on the mash with rocket leaves over the steak and the hot sauce over everything.

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MUSSELS & FISH WITH SPINACH & CREAM ON RED POTATOES & RICE

It is good to have recipes that can do duty as everyday meals but are interesting enough to serve to guests, too

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BRAISED CHICKEN WITH GREEN OLIVES & PEAS & ALMOND COUSCOUS

SERVES 4-6

This stovetop braise is served with couscous which, if you use the Tipiak brand, is prepared by simply pouring boiling water over it. A full-bodied Chardonnay works well with this.

- 300g instant couscous (use the Tipiak brand for this method)
- 5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup golden raisins
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 skinned, boned free-range chicken thighs (about 800g)
- flour for dusting
- large pinch of chilli flakes
- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds, toasted in a dry pan until fragrant and just dark
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup large green olives
- 500ml chicken stock
- 2 cups peas
- ½ cup roasted unsalted almonds, chopped

Place the couscous in a heatproof bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of the oil and the raisins, and season well. Pour enough boiling water over the couscous to just cover. Quickly mix well until combined then cover with tinfoil and a plate. Leave to stand for 20 minutes.

Heat the remaining 3 tablespoons of the oil in a wide frying pan over moderate heat.

Dust the chicken thighs with flour and fry on each side until browned. Add the chilli flakes, cumin seeds, cinnamon, garlic, olives and the chicken stock. Mix well then spread everything out evenly so the chicken thighs are side by side and the olives are evenly distributed. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes until the chicken is cooked.

Uncover, bring to the boil and add the peas. Mix well, bring back to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Taste and season.

Uncover the couscous (it will still be hot), fluff up with a fork so there are no lumps and stir in the almonds.

Serve the chicken, peas and olives on the couscous. Good with a hot sauce like Kaitaia Fire.

POACHED SAUSAGE & VEGETABLES WITH MUSTARD AÏOLI

SERVES 4-6

I love the clean taste and easy cooking of poached and steamed food. These poached sausages with vegetables in a savoury broth and sharp, rich sauce go well with a Côtes-du-Rhône or similar Grenache blend.

- 200ml bought aïoli (I use Food by Chefs Free-Range Egg Aïoli)
- 2 tablespoons wholegrain mustard
- 3 gherkins, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 medium all-purpose potatoes, peeled and diced 3cm
- 3 carrots, peeled and sliced 2cm thick
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 6 good-quality pure pork sausages (about 800g)
- 250g green beans, stalk ends cut off and beans halved
- 4 spring onions, root ends trimmed and green leaf cut off

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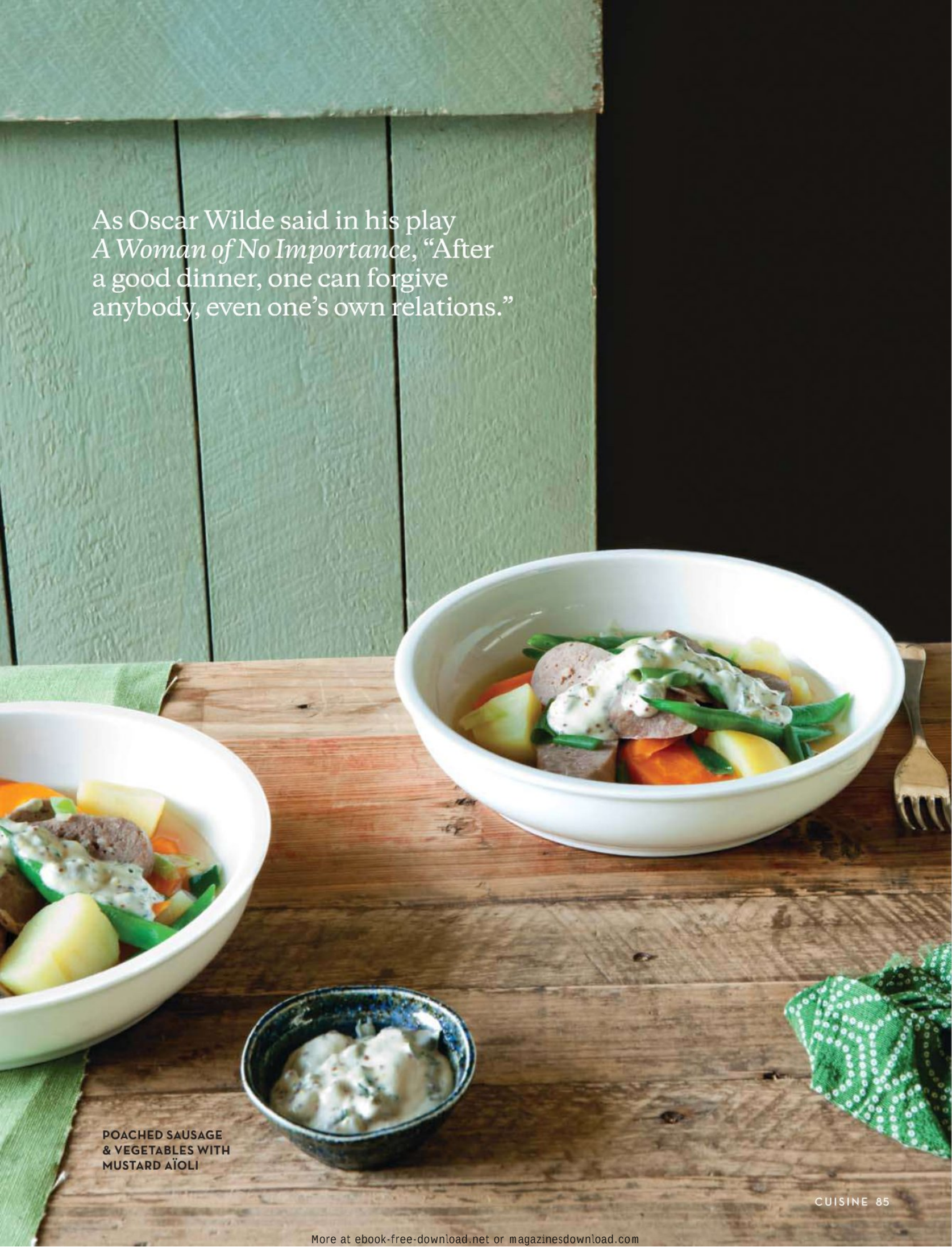
As Oscar Wilde said in his play *A Woman of No Importance*, "After a good dinner, one can forgive anybody, even one's own relations."



POACHED SAUSAGE & VEGETABLES WITH MUSTARD AÏOLI

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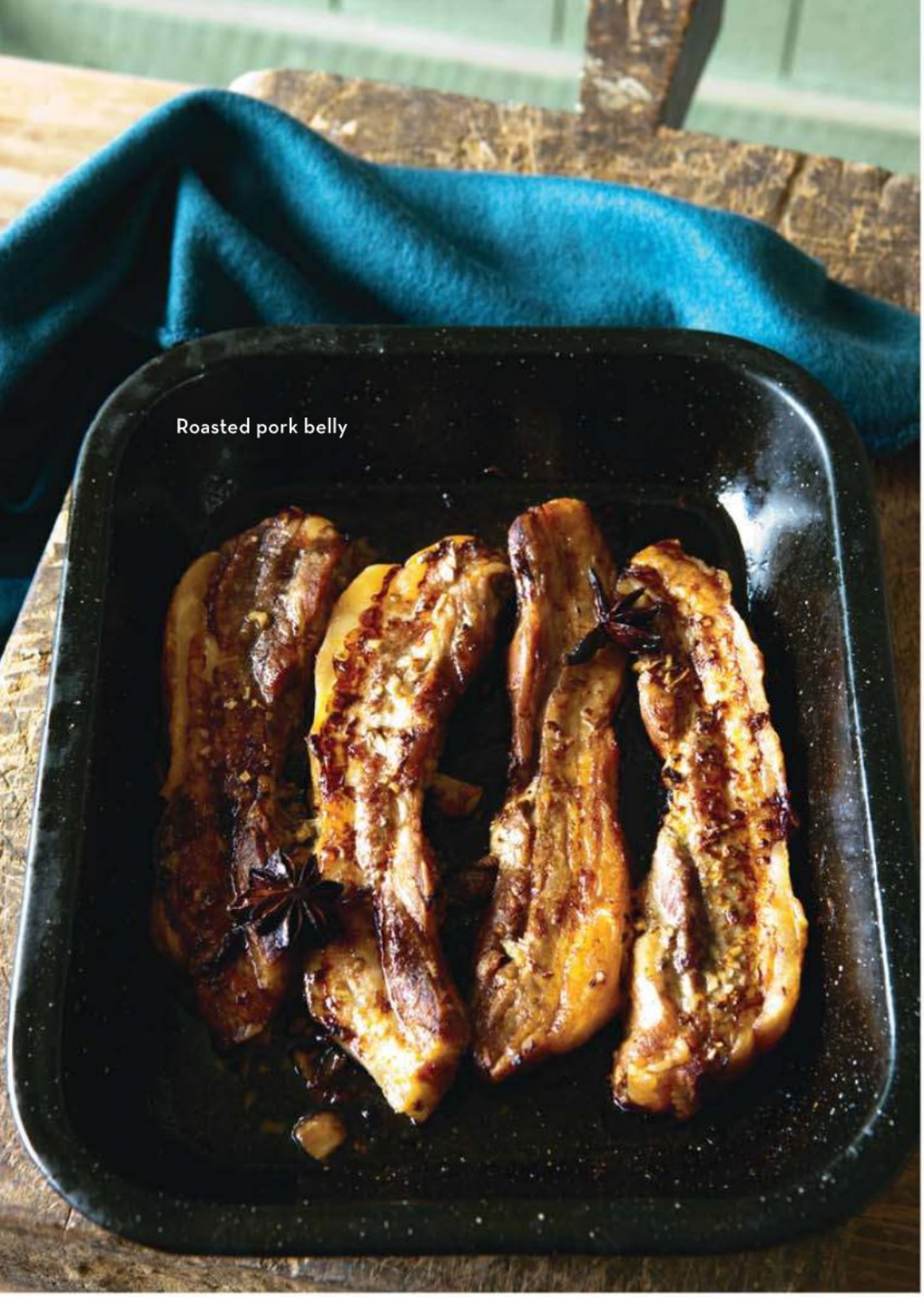

Roasted pork belly

Put the aïoli, mustard, gherkins, capers and parsley in a bowl, and mix well. Taste and season. Reserve.

Put the potatoes and carrots, stock and bay leaf in a saucepan. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes then add the sausages and simmer for 10-15 minutes until the sausages are cooked.

Remove the sausages. Add the beans and spring onions, and simmer a further 5 minutes until everything is tender. Taste and season.

Slice the sausages and serve with the vegetables and a little broth with a dollop of the aïoli.

PORK WITH BRAISED GREENS IN LEMON SOY BROTH & NOODLES

SERVES 4-6

The pork takes 45 minutes to cook, but only requires checking now and again. I like the Chiu Chow chilli oil you get in Hong Kong with this; the Lee Kum Kee brand available here at supermarkets works well, too. If you can't get edamame beans, use peeled broad beans or peas. Match this with a crisp lager or fruity Pinot Noir.

2 tablespoons soybean oil
2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped ginger, plus 3 thin slices
700g skinned, boned belly pork, cut into 8 even slices
2 star anise pods
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 large handful broccoli florets
3 baby bok choy, sliced into quarters lengthwise
3 tablespoons Japanese soy sauce
500ml chicken stock
zest and juice of 1 lemon or to taste
½ cup podded edamame beans (optional; these are young soy beans available frozen at Asian stores)
250g thin Chinese noodles, cooked in plenty of boiling water until al dente, well drained and tossed with 3 tablespoons sesame oil
Chiu Chow chilli oil for serving

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Put the oil, garlic and chopped ginger in a small bowl and mix well.

Place the pork slices side by side in a roasting dish and brush the oil mixture over them. Place the star anise pods in the dish, season well, place the dish in the oven and roast for 40-45 minutes until the pork is very crisp, the fat has melted and it is well browned. Remove from the oven and drain the fat off (reserve and use to stir-fry vegetables or rice).

Meanwhile, place the broccoli and bok choy in a wok. Add the slices of ginger, soy sauce, stock and lemon zest. Bring to the boil and simmer for 2 minutes. Add the edamame if using and simmer a further minute. Add the lemon juice, mix well, taste and season.

Place some hot noodles in serving plates, pile the greens on top and moisten with a little broth. Slice the pork on the diagonal and place on top of the greens. Serve with chilli oil on the side.

Credits: Essence Contour bowls and Hugo Pott 2736 cutlery all from The Studio of Tableware; small dipping bowl from Japanese Lifestyle; antique cutlery from Antiques of Epsom; hand-painted porcelain plate from Chinchin Trader; green linen from Martha's Fabrics; wooden table from French Country Collections; Rachel Carley blossom bowl from Mixt. For full details, see Credits Index.

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PREMIUM BLEND

Cleverly considered variety spices the cuisine of Sam Pope, head chef at Wellington's Ambeli

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY SAM POPE / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT / STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

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As a typical setting for Mediterranean-inspired food, a Mt Vic settlers' cottage may not be the obvious, but head chef Sam Pope has been turning out his classics with a twist there since Ambeli's inception. It was 2006 when Sam teamed up with owners Shae Moleta and Elisavet George, of Italian and Greek-Cypriot heritage, respectively. And it is their Mediterranean heritage and Sam's affinity for that broad spectrum of cuisine, cultivated during much travelling in that part of the world, that informs the menu. However, the dishes are his original takes. "They are never quite as you would expect – they're always reworked." This is perhaps why he is particularly inspired by the cuisine of Sicily, a cultural melting pot thanks to the peoples who have converged there. This is seen in pan-roasted fish, with crayfish and chilli mayo, Israeli couscous and fennel and saffron broth, based on a Sicilian classic but with Spanish vermouth, a few French and Italian techniques thrown in and ingredients from around the Med. And in time for winter, he has reinterpreted lasagne with Marsala-braised Southland goat layered with herb-filled goat's curd instead of béchamel and handmade organic egg pasta.

"I borrow ideas and ingredients from the Mediterranean, put them together in sometimes surprising and I think modern ways, using the finest of New Zealand, mainly organic, produce," says Sam. We can't argue with that and regulars agree. There are several dishes on the menu that regulars will not allow to vanish (Sam will have to play them again), such as the potato, caper and anchovy "pancake", noted in these pages before, and the summer gazpacho with mint and cucumber granita – a reworking of Spanish and Sicilian classics. You'll have to go to the restaurant for those, but the haloumi entrée here is based on another Ambeli favourite. Enjoy.

✱ TONI MASON

THE MENU

Panfried Haloumi with Chioggia Beetroot, Roasted Hazelnut & Wild Rice Salad

Pan-Roasted Chicken Breasts with Chilli & Anchovy Braised Cavolo Nero & Sautéed Sage Potatoes

Baked Coffee & Chocolate Custards with Crumbled Amaretti Biscuits & Vanilla Cream

PANFRIED HALOUMI WITH CHIOGGIA BEETROOT, ROASTED HAZELNUT & WILD RICE SALAD

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PANFRIED HALOUMI WITH CHIOGGIA BEETROOT, ROASTED HAZELNUT & WILD RICE SALAD

SERVES 6

This recipe is adapted from a popular entrée at Ambeli. I like to use Zany Zeus haloumi, which is made locally in Wellington and an absolutely fabulous product, with dried mint folded through the cheese. A Pinot Grigio is good with the haloumi.

150g whole fresh hazelnuts
75g wild rice
salt to taste
50ml lemon juice
1 teaspoon manuka honey
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
3 shallots, very finely chopped
100ml extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
freshly ground black pepper
3 medium chioggia beetroot (or regular if unavailable), peeled and sliced very finely (I recommend using a Japanese mandoline but a knife will suffice)
handful flat-leafed parsley leaves, coarsely chopped
handful mint leaves, coarsely chopped
500g haloumi, cut into 1cm-thick slices

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Roast the hazelnuts for 4-5 minutes until browned. To remove the skins, tip on to a tea towel and fold the sides over so the hazelnuts are enveloped within. Rub the nuts together for 2 minutes – most of the skins should flake off in this time. Pick out the nuts, chop coarsely and cool.

Place the rice in a saucepan, cover with cold water and add a good pinch of salt. Bring to the boil, reduce to a simmer and cook uncovered for 10-15 minutes until puffed but still with some texture. Drain and cool.

To make the dressing, put the lemon juice, honey, mustard and shallots in a bowl. Slowly whisk in the oil to form an emulsion. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Put the beetroot in a large bowl with the herbs, hazelnuts and cooked wild rice. Add enough dressing to lightly coat the salad. Season with salt and pepper and toss together.

Heat a non-stick frying pan and add a drizzle of olive oil. Fry the haloumi on each side for 1 minute. You want the cheese to have a well-coloured crust on, and be lovely and gooey on the inside. Serve 3 slices per person with a spoonful of the salad and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. The addition of crusty bread would turn this entrée into a lovely lunch.

PAN-ROASTED CHICKEN WITH CHILLI & ANCHOVY BRAISED CAVOLO NERO & SAUTÉED SAGE POTATOES

SERVES 6

This dish is just the sort of thing we eat at home as comfort food in the depths of winter. I always recommend organic chicken – "happy" birds free of chemicals taste the way chickens are meant to, in my opinion, and worth every cent of the extra expense.

Winter greens are cheap and really deliver taste and texture. I regularly cook these potatoes for guests – once you master the technique, you will find you can never make enough!

A Grenache is lovely with the chicken and the cavolo nero.

6 free-range, organic chicken breasts
2kg Agria potatoes, peeled and chopped into even 2cm-3cm chunks
rice bran oil for frying
1 cup coarsely chopped sage leaves
Maldon sea salt to taste
750g cavolo nero (or other winter greens such as collard or kale)
1 large onion, finely diced
4 good-quality anchovy fillets (I use Ortiz)
2 red chillies, seeded and finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, crushed
150ml white wine
150ml chicken stock
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Remove the chicken breasts from the refrigerator to bring up to room temperature before pan-roasting.

Place the potatoes in a saucepan of cold salted water and bring to a simmer. Cook for about 15 minutes or until a knife will pierce them with little resistance. Drain in a colander and gently toss to roughen the edges. This helps them get really crisp. For the best result, use a heavy cast-iron frying pan. Heat over a moderate heat then pour in enough rice bran oil to cover the base. Add the potatoes and reduce to a gentle heat – the longer and slower they are sautéed, the better (they take at least 45 minutes). Gently turn the potatoes every 5-10 minutes to ensure an even crust.

When really crisp and just before serving, add the sage leaves. Stir carefully and fry for a couple of minutes. Tip on to paper towels and sprinkle with Maldon salt.

If you are using cavalo nero, it is good to remove some of the excess bitterness (this step is not necessary for kale or collard). First, strip the leaves off the stems, which are woody and not good to eat. Drop the leaves into salted boiling water for 30 seconds then drain in a sieve.

Gently fry the onion over low heat with a pinch of salt until soft and transparent. Increase the temperature to medium heat and add the anchovy fillets, chillies and garlic, and fry for 2 minutes. Add the wine and simmer to reduce by at least half. Stir in the cavolo nero, add the stock and simmer for 15 minutes. Taste for seasoning.

Sprinkle the skin of the chicken with a little salt and leave to stand for 10 minutes to help get the skin really crisp. Heat a metal frying pan until smoking hot then carefully add 2 teaspoons of oil. Season the flesh side and place the chicken breasts in the pan skin side down. Reduce the temperature to medium.

Resist the temptation to move the breasts around – you want to achieve a really good crust. Fry for about 5 minutes then place the pan in the oven. Set the timer for 5 minutes. When the timer sounds, turn the breasts over and cook for a further 4-5 minutes until the breasts are just springy to the touch. Place on a tray and allow to rest for 5 minutes.

Serve the chicken breasts on a bed of the braised cavolo nero with a bowl of the sage potatoes in the centre of the table to fight over. Mayonnaise is a delicious condiment with this dish.

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This dish is just the sort of thing we eat at home as comfort food in the depths of winter

PAN-ROASTED CHICKEN BREASTS WITH CHILLI & ANCHOVY BRAISED CAVOLO NERO & SAUTÉED SAGE POTATOES

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BAKED COFFEE & CHOCOLATE CUSTARDS WITH CRUMBLED AMARETTI BISCUITS & VANILLA CREAM

MAKES 6

I always enjoy the French and Italian habit of following dessert with an espresso and a digestif. This is a way to enjoy those flavours as the dessert itself. Easily prepared in advance and only minutes to finish, it is perfectly matched with Pedro Ximénez sherry.

2 vanilla beans
330ml milk
1 shot strong espresso or 1 tablespoon instant coffee
30g caster sugar
2 tablespoons Kahlua or brandy
175g dark chocolate (72% cocoa or more, as buttons or chopped)
5 organic eggs
1 packet amaretti biscuits (available from good supermarkets)
1 tablespoon icing sugar
150ml fresh cream

Preheat the oven to 160°C.

Split the vanilla beans lengthwise and scrape out the seeds with the back of a knife. Reserve the seeds for the vanilla cream and place the split vanilla beans, the milk, coffee, caster sugar and Kahlua or brandy in a saucepan, and slowly bring to boiling point. Immediately take off the heat and set aside for a few minutes.

Put the chocolate in a bowl. Add the hot milk mixture slowly bit by bit, stirring continuously to melt the chocolate and prevent it from overheating and splitting. The mixture should become very velvety and be free of lumps.

Separate the eggs. Put the yolks in a large bowl and save the whites for another purpose.

Add the milk and chocolate mixture bit by bit to the egg yolks while whisking vigorously. You run the risk of scrambling the eggs if you do it too fast. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve.

The custard base is now ready to be cooked. The custards will be served in the vessels they are cooked in. You can have fun with this if you like, using small bowls or even coffee cups or just standard ramekins. The custards are cooked in a bain-marie – a pan of hot water.

Fill a kettle with water and bring to the boil. Arrange the vessels you are using in a deep roasting dish. Fill each to two-thirds full with the custard. Carefully pour boiling water into the dish around the ramekins up to the same level as that of the custard. This will protect the mix from the aggressive heat of the oven and help them cook evenly.

Carefully place in the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes until the custards are set but have a slight wobble in the middle. Remove from the oven, take the ramekins out of the water, cool on a wire rack then cover and refrigerate. Once cooked the custards will last 3 days in the fridge.

To make the vanilla cream, put the vanilla seeds, icing sugar and cream into a bowl and whisk to soft peaks. Crush the amaretti biscuits into small pieces with your hands.

To serve, sprinkle a layer of the biscuit crumbs over the surface of the custard. Spoon on a dollop of cream and enjoy.

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I always enjoy following dessert with an espresso and a digestif. This is a way to enjoy those flavours as the dessert

BAKED COFFEE & CHOCOLATE CUSTARDS WITH CRUMBLED AMARETTI BISCUITS & VANILLA CREAM

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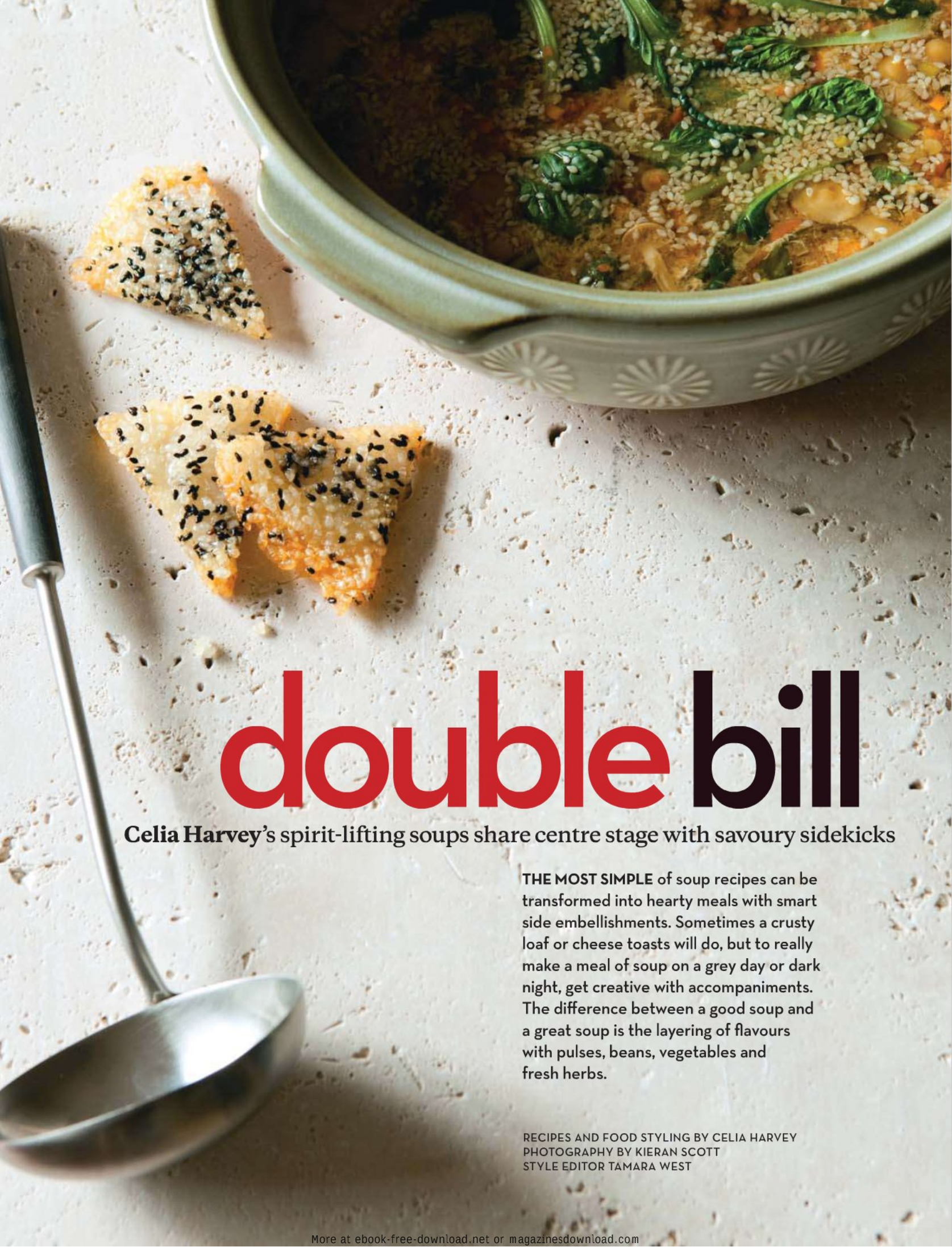

double bill

Celia Harvey's spirit-lifting soups share centre stage with savoury sidekicks

THE MOST SIMPLE of soup recipes can be transformed into hearty meals with smart side embellishments. Sometimes a crusty loaf or cheese toasts will do, but to really make a meal of soup on a grey day or dark night, get creative with accompaniments. The difference between a good soup and a great soup is the layering of flavours with pulses, beans, vegetables and fresh herbs.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY CELIA HARVEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

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SMOKED FISH CHOWDER WITH FRIED CLUB SANDWICHES

SERVES 4 AS A MAIN

This comforting bowl of smoky flavours is enriched with cream and thickened with potatoes. I use smoked trevally or other oily fish for a really intense fish flavour, finished with fresh chopped parsley and a sprinkle of garam masala to lift the creaminess.

1 onion, chopped
1 stick celery, finely sliced
1 teaspoon garam masala
100g butter
30g flour
2-3 medium floury potatoes, peeled and chopped into 2cm dice
500ml fish stock or water
salt and freshly ground black pepper
150ml cream
250g smoked fish fillet, flaked
handful chopped curly parsley

Fry the onion, celery and garam masala in the butter until soft (around 5 minutes). Sprinkle the flour over, add the potatoes and stir to coat with butter then stir in the stock or water.

Season with salt and pepper, and reduce the heat. Cover with a lid and simmer gently for 20 minutes until the potatoes are very soft, checking and stirring occasionally to prevent them from sticking. Add more stock or water if necessary.

When the potato base has reduced to a purée add the cream and, with a potato masher, crush out any lumps. Add the fish and mix well. Bring back to near boiling point, but do not allow to boil. Check the seasoning, add a generous handful of chopped parsley and serve with the fried club sandwiches.

Fried Club Sandwiches with Egg, Spring Onion & Cheddar

SERVES 4

I love the idea of a melted fried club sandwich with this soup. Melted cheese and spring onion work well with the smoky fish.

3 eggs, lowered into boiling water for 5 minutes then cooled under cold water and peeled
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard or ½ teaspoon mustard powder
2 tablespoons mayonnaise or sour cream
2 spring onions, finely sliced
12 slices thin white sandwich bread
butter for spreading
8 generous slices of mature or tasty cheddar
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the soft-boiled eggs in a bowl and mash with a fork. Add the mustard, mayonnaise or sour cream and spring onions.

Spread 4 slices of bread with the egg mix. Place another slice of bread on top of each and press firmly. Butter the top slices then place 2 cheese slices on each. Top with another slice of bread and press. Butter the tops and bottoms.

Slice off the crusts and fry the sandwiches on each side in a frying pan over medium heat with a little more butter until golden.

Cut each sandwich into 3 and serve immediately with the fish chowder.

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LAMB SHANK SOUP WITH MUSTARD & LEEK GRIDDLE SCONES
recipe page 100

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BLACK BEAN, TORTILLA & TOMATO CHILLI SOUP WITH GREEN SALSA

SERVES 4

This is a classic Mexican dish. It's very simple, but impressive and certainly unusual. Use Adobo chilli paste – a staple of Mexican cookery – in place of fresh chilli if you can, as it is now available in some supermarkets and specialty stores.

olive oil for frying
1 onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
½ teaspoon Adobo chilli paste or 1 small red chilli, finely sliced
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
400g can chopped tomatoes (or 400g can Mexican tomatoes, or in season 6 ripe fresh tomatoes, coarsely chopped)
1 litre chicken or vegetable stock
400g can black beans or black-eyed beans
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 small fresh corn tortillas
sour cream and fresh coriander for serving (optional)

In a medium saucepan, heat some olive oil and fry the onion, garlic and chilli gently until soft but not coloured. Add the tomato paste and let it fry until it just starts to stick then add the vinegar. Add the tomatoes and stock, and simmer gently until the tomatoes start to break down and thicken (15-20 minutes).

Rinse and drain the beans then place half in the food processor and pulse to coarsely chop. Add to the soup base with the whole beans and season well.

Meanwhile, cut the tortillas into 2cm-wide strips and fry in oil until golden and crisp. Drain on paper towels and set aside.

When ready to serve place 5 or 6 of the tortilla strips in each of 4 warm bowls, divide the soup among the bowls and swirl in sour cream and coriander if using.

Serve with the green salsa and the remaining fried tortilla strips on the side.

Green Salsa

It's important that all the ingredients are diced very finely and left to marinate so the salsa develops a truly intense flavour.

small bunch coriander, finely chopped
2 spring onions, finely chopped
¼ cup finely diced seeded cucumber
juice of 2 limes or 1 lemon
salt to taste
diced green chilli (optional)

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and leave for at least 1 hour for the flavours to blend.

SPINACH LENTIL SOUP WITH CRISP ONIONS & TAHINI PITA

SERVES 4-6

Puy lentils are the preferred choice for this soup to be truly at its best, as they are far superior to other green or brown lentils. Plus, they don't need to be soaked and cook quickly. This soup has a wonderful earthy flavour and wholesome richness.

olive oil for frying
1 onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
2 stalks celery, finely chopped
175g Puy lentils (or other green lentils if not available)
1 litre vegetable stock
350g spinach, well washed and coarsely chopped
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted and crushed
juice of 1 lemon

Place enough olive oil in a large saucepan to cover the base. Add the onion, garlic and celery, then gently fry for 10 minutes until everything starts to colour.

Wash the lentils and check for little stones and grit then drain and add to the saucepan. Add the vegetable stock and simmer for 20 minutes, skimming off any foam that accumulates on the surface.

After 20 minutes, stir the spinach into the soup; it will wilt quickly. Season with salt and pepper, and add the cumin seeds and lemon juice. Ladle half the soup into a food processer and purée. Taste and adjust the seasoning (it takes a generous amount). Return the purée to the saucepan, reheat and serve with tahini pita and sprinklings of fried onions.

Tahini Pita

100g (about 4 tablespoons) tahini paste
1 clove garlic, crushed with a pinch of salt
¼ teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted and ground
juice of ½ lemon
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 small pita breads
olive oil for brushing

In the bowl of a food processor, blend the tahini, garlic, cumin and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. It will be thick, so add a little water while blending to achieve a more pliable mix.

Brush the pita with olive oil then spread with the tahini mix. Place under a medium grill – not too close as they can catch quickly – until bubbling. Cut into wedges and serve.

Crisp Onions

These onions – or you can use shallots – are used in South-East Asian cooking as a garnish. They add interesting texture and flavour to this soup. Note that the onions need to be cut very thinly and evenly.

1 small onion or 4 medium shallots, very finely sliced
½ teaspoon salt
vegetable oil for shallow frying

Place the onion or shallots in a bowl, sprinkle with salt then cover with water. Leave for 30 minutes then drain and dry well on paper towels.

Pour about 4cm of oil into a wok or pan and heat carefully to medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the onions. Stir and fry for a minute. Turn the heat down and continue to cook until crisp and reddish brown. Remove with a slotted spoon, drain on paper towels and serve or store in a tightly lidded jar.

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SPINACH LENTIL SOUP WITH
CRISP ONIONS & TAHINI PITA

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LAMB SHANK SOUP WITH MUSTARD & LEEK GRIDDLE SCONES

SERVES 4-6

This meat and pulse soup is based on traditional Scotch broth – one of the heartiest of winter soups and a classic one-pot wonder main.

Shanks are a winner in winter and this soup is quite economical, as the meat goes a long way.

3 lamb shanks (about 1.3kg bone-in weight)
5 cloves garlic, 2 whole and 3 sliced
butter or oil for frying
2 large onions, diced
3 leeks, white part cut into thick rings and green reserved for the scones
4 rashers rindless smoked streaky bacon or pancetta, diced
1 small swede, peeled and cut into large dice
1 small celeriac, peeled and cut into large dice (or 3 carrots if unavailable)
50g pearl barley
700ml lamb or chicken stock
few sprigs fresh thyme
2 fresh bay leaves
1 teaspoon salt
freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a large saucepan, place the shanks and 2 whole cloves of garlic then cover with cold water. Bring to a simmer, cover and simmer gently for 1 hour.

In a frying pan, heat a little butter or oil and start to fry the onions and sliced garlic. Add the leeks and fry gently until soft without colouring.

Add the bacon or pancetta and the remaining vegetables, and cook for a further 5 minutes.

Test the shanks for doneness – the meat should be falling off the bone. Remove from the water with a slotted spoon. Discard half the cooking water and the garlic cloves then add the barley to the water to soak while you shred the meat off the bone with a fork.

Add the vegetables to the saucepan with the stock and herbs. Return the shredded lamb to the pan and cook for a further 40-60 minutes until the barley is puffed up and well cooked.

Season well with salt and black pepper.

Serve with the griddle scones and butter.

Mustard & Leek Griddle Scones

MAKES 6

Griddle scones are unleavened; I liken them to baked dumplings. You could also add crisp bacon, cheese or dried chilli to the mix.

¼ leek (green part reserved from the soup), finely sliced
125g butter
1½ cups flour
1 tablespoon wholegrain mustard
salt and freshly ground black pepper
milk for mixing

Preheat the oven to 200°C or 180°C fanbake and line a tray with baking paper.

In a small frying pan, quickly fry the leek in 25g of the butter until it darkens and sizzles (the leeks are very flavoursome when cooked until quite dark). Set aside to cool.

Sift the flour into a bowl and rub in the remaining 100g of butter until the mix has a sandy texture. With a fork, mix in the mustard and leeks. Season with salt and pepper, and add enough milk to form a soft dough. Do not overmix or they will be tough.

Shape the dough into an oblong shape and cut into 2cm slices.

Bake for 5-6 minutes. They will be quite heavy and crumbly. Best served warm straight from the oven.

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ASIAN BROTH WITH STRAW MUSHROOMS, EGG & FRIED RICE CAKES

SERVES 4

The base for this really quick-to-make soup is a light, restorative ginger soy broth with egg and green vegetables. Whisking in egg quickly enriches the broth. You can also add shredded chicken, shrimps or tofu if you like.

1 litre vegetable stock
1 carrot, peeled and very finely diced
knob fresh ginger, very finely grated
1 tablespoon (about 10g) miso paste
2 teaspoons rice vinegar or sherry
2 teaspoons tamari or light soy sauce
3 handfuls spinach or 2 heads choy sum or other Asian green, ends trimmed but stalks left on
2 spring onions, finely sliced
1 packet enoki or straw mushrooms (available fresh year round)
2 eggs, whisked with 1 teaspoon sesame oil
sesame seeds to garnish

In a large saucepan, bring the stock to a gentle simmer then add the carrot and ginger. Simmer until the carrot is tender (4-5 minutes) then add the miso paste, rice vinegar and tamari.

Add the spinach or Asian greens and the spring onions. When the greens are just wilted, add the enoki or straw mushrooms and simmer for a couple of minutes.

Remove the saucepan from the heat and quickly whisk in the egg and sesame oil mixture. Ladle into warm bowls and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serve immediately with the fried rice cakes.

Fried Rice Cakes

Chinese cooks use the layers of cooked rice that stick to the bottom of rice cookers for this soup garnish. Allow it to dry in a warm oven then fry until crisp. This method doesn't require a full rice cooker of rice – just enough cooked rice to spread thinly over a baking tray. The rice is best cooked the day before and dried overnight to crisp for frying.

½ cup short-grain rice or sushi rice
60ml rice wine vinegar
2 teaspoons black sesame seeds, or toasted golden sesame seeds
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the rice in a sieve and rinse under cold water until the water runs clear. Place in a saucepan with 300ml of water and cook uncovered until the water is absorbed and the rice tender (10-15 minutes). Remove from the heat and spread out on a tray to cool. Sprinkle with vinegar, sesame seeds and salt and pepper.

Place in a 120°C oven overnight.

Cut or shape into triangles and fry in shallow oil until crisp. Drain on paper towels and serve.

Credits: Serving bowl, small ceramic bowls, ceramic soup bowls and plates from Japanese Lifestyle; wooden chopping board from Cranfields; white decorative bowl and silver antique ladle from Antiques of Epsom; pewter serving dish from French Country Collections; Sophie Conran bowls, Cutipol Ebony ladle, Silk by Auerhahn and Tol by Auerhahn cutlery from The Studio of Tableware; Travertine Cross Cut Tumbled and Unfilled tile as background from Artedomus. For full details, see Credits Index.

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comfort zone

Kathy Snowball prepares heartening pasta dishes for the colder months

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BAKED PUMPKIN GNOCCHI WITH BRAISED LEEKS & TOMATO SAUCE recipe page 108

Winter is the time to tuck into comforting bowls of pasta. Here vegetables and cheese, rather than meat-based sauces, are the heroes. Now that I have my own vegetable garden I have a new-found respect for the grower. But because I now know what truly fresh produce tastes like, it has also made me more discerning when I buy. I shop at farmers' markets where possible; otherwise I look for organic produce.

As for cheese, it wasn't that long ago that we had a poor selection. Now we are blessed with a wide variety of styles including goat's milk cheese and buffalo mozzarella. These recipes are vegetarian – however, they are designed for one and all to enjoy.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY KATHY SNOWBALL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRETT STEVENS
STYLIST KRISTINE DURAN-THIESSEN

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THREE CHEESE RAVIOLI WITH CAULIFLOWER, CURRANTS & PINE NUTS

MAKES 12 (SERVES 4)

Ravioli are very satisfying to make, but you need a pasta machine and it is time-consuming. Many specialty food stores sell fresh cheese ravioli, so you can just make the topping, if you prefer, which also works tossed with spaghetti and served sprinkled with parmesan. If you can't find smoked mozzarella, use your favourite smoked cheese. Only add a few drops of water to the dough if it is too stiff – too much water and it will be sticky.

200g flour or Tipo "00" Italian flour, plus extra for dusting
pinch of salt
3 large eggs
3 teaspoons olive oil
½ cup grated smoked mozzarella
½ cup ricotta
½ cup finely grated parmesan
grated zest of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon thyme leaves
salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ small cauliflower, cut into florets
light olive oil for shallow frying
½ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for serving
4 spring onions, chopped
2 tablespoons currants
2 tablespoons pine nuts
2 tablespoons lemon juice
½ cup flat-leafed parsley leaves

Place the flour and salt in a food processor. Whisk the eggs and oil to mix, add to the flour and process until combined. Add a few drops of water if the dough is stiff. Knead lightly on a floured surface until smooth, cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Combine the cheeses, lemon zest and thyme. Season to taste.

For the topping, blanch the cauliflower in simmering salted water for 1 minute. Drain, rinse under cold water and drain on paper towels. Toss in flour and shallow-fry in hot oil until golden. Drain.

Heat ½ cup of oil in a frying pan over medium heat and fry the spring onions, currants and pine nuts for 1 minute. Stir in the lemon juice and cauliflower. Season to taste. Set aside.

Cut the dough into 4 pieces. Roll out a piece (keeping the other dough covered with a tea towel) using a pasta machine, dusting lightly with flour as you go, until paper thin (about the second lowest setting). Place on a floured surface, cut in half and trim the edges. Cut each half into 3 x 8cm squares.

Place 1 tablespoon of filling in the middle of 3 pieces, brush the edges lightly with water and top with another square. Press the edges to seal, removing any air bubbles. Trim the edges, place on a tray, cover with a tea towel and refrigerate until ready to use. Repeat with the remaining dough and filling.

Cook the ravioli in batches in simmering salted water for 2-3 minutes or until they float. Remove with a slotted spoon and place in serving bowls. Serve topped with the cauliflower mixture and parsley leaves, and drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil.

PAPPARDELLE WITH EGGPLANT & ROASTED ONIONS

SERVES 4

I love this dish – it's so simple and quick to make. I have tried this recipe with fresh and dried pappardelle. Both work well, but my preference is for the fresh variety – its silkiness works well with the eggplant sauce. For non-vegetarians, I suggest some shredded prosciutto tossed through the roasted onions just before serving.

2 red onions, each cut into 8 wedges
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for brushing
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 eggplant, halved
¼ cup olive oil
4 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
125ml dry white wine
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 small red chillies, seeded and chopped
2 teaspoons chopped oregano, plus extra to serve
500g pappardelle or your favourite ribbon pasta
shaved pecorino to serve

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PAPPARDELLE WITH EGGPLANT & ROASTED ONIONS

This dish is so simple and quick to make. My preference is for fresh pappardelle – its silkiness works well with the eggplant sauce

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Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Place the onions in a roasting pan, toss with the extra virgin olive oil and season to taste.

Place the eggplant on an oven tray and brush with a little oil. Roast the onions and eggplant for about 30 minutes until the eggplant is soft and the onions are lightly browned. Scoop the eggplant flesh from skin and chop coarsely. Set both aside.

Heat the ¼ cup olive oil in a frying pan, add the tomatoes, wine, garlic and chillies, and cook over high heat until the tomatoes are soft and the wine is reduced by half. Add the eggplant and oregano, cook for a further minute then season to taste.

Cook the pappardelle in simmering salted water until tender but al dente. Drain and toss with the tomato and eggplant mixture.

Serve topped with the onions, pecorino and extra oregano leaves.

MACARONI CHEESE WITH SPINACH & FETA

SERVES 4

I live in rural New South Wales and grow enough Sangiovese grapes to make a barrel of wine a year. Friends help pick the grapes and lunch is a highlight of the day. This year I made this dish in vast quantities and served it with salad and barbecued pork and fennel sausages, washed down with rosé. It was a great success, fortifying the troops throughout the afternoon.

30g butter
30g flour
500ml warm milk
salt and freshly ground black pepper
200g spinach, trimmed, stalks discarded and washed
250g elbow-shaped pasta
150g gruyère, grated
100g goat's milk feta, crumbled
50g stale breadcrumbs

For the béchamel sauce, heat the butter in a saucepan, add the flour and stir over low heat until dry and grainy. Gradually whisk in the milk, whisking continuously until the sauce thickens, then simmer for 2 minutes. Season to taste and set aside.

Toss the spinach in a wok over medium heat until wilted. Drain, rinse under cold water and squeeze out excess water. Chop coarsely.

Cook the pasta in simmering salted water until just tender, drain then place in a large bowl. Stir in the sauce, 100g of the gruyère, feta and spinach. Taste, season then spoon into a 1.5-litre (6-cup) heatproof serving dish and sprinkle with the combined breadcrumbs and remaining 50g gruyère. Place under a hot grill until the top is browned and crisp. Serve with a salad (I like radicchio, rocket and pear dressed with extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar).

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MACARONI CHEESE
WITH SPINACH & FETA

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MUSHROOM & ROASTED FENNEL LASAGNE

SERVES 4-6

I had only ever had lasagne with a Bolognese-style meat sauce until I went to Italy where I tried it with a brothy boar sauce and with layered roasted vegetables. I have since made many variations and this is one of my favourites. I like the intense flavour of large flat mushrooms here, especially with the addition of dried porcini.

10g dried porcini mushrooms
500g fennel bulb, trimmed and sliced
extra virgin olive oil for drizzling
salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup olive oil
1 red onion, chopped
800g flat mushrooms, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 teaspoons chopped thyme
2 teaspoons chopped oregano
50g butter, plus extra for greasing
50g flour
500ml warm milk
120g mature cheddar, grated
250g precooked lasagne sheets
100g buffalo mozzarella, sliced

Soak the porcini in ½ cup hot water for 30 minutes until soft. Drain and chop, reserving the water. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the fennel on an oven tray, drizzle with a little oil, season to taste and roast for about 20 minutes until lightly browned and tender.

Heat the olive oil in a large wide pan and fry the onion over low heat until soft. Add the fresh mushrooms and stir until soft. Add the porcini, garlic and herbs, season to taste and fry for 5 minutes.

For the sauce, melt the butter in a saucepan over low heat. Whisk in the flour until dry and grainy. Gradually whisk in the milk and mushroom water, and simmer for 5 minutes. Season to taste. Remove from the heat and stir in 80g of the cheddar.

Lightly butter a 2-litre (8-cup) heatproof dish and place a layer of lasagne on the base. Top with half the mushrooms, half the fennel, the mozzarella and a third of the sauce. Top with a layer of pasta, remaining mushrooms and fennel, and half the remaining sauce. Top with another layer of pasta and the remaining sauce. Sprinkle with the remaining cheddar and bake at 200°C for 20 minutes until cooked and golden.

Serve with a baby spinach salad dressed with extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice.

BAKED PUMPKIN GNOCCHI WITH BRAISED LEEKS & TOMATO SAUCE

SERVES 4

In this gnocchi I have used pumpkin instead of potato and added cheese and semolina for texture. You can use two spoons to shape the dough into small quenelles and poach them, but baking gives a more intense flavour.

1kg butternut, skin on and cut into 5cm pieces
1 egg, lightly beaten
80g parmesan, finely grated
100g flour
50g fine semolina
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
2 leeks (white part only), sliced into 1cm rounds
⅔ cup vegetable stock
2 tablespoons pitted baby black olives
400g can Italian tomatoes
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
pinch of brown sugar
2 teaspoons finely sliced sage
coarsely grated parmesan to serve

Roast the pumpkin at 200°C for 45 minutes until tender. Scoop the flesh off the skin and push through a ricer or mouli. Mix with the egg, parmesan, flour and semolina. Season to taste.

Line an ovenproof dish with baking paper, spoon in the dough to a depth of 2cm, smooth the surface and bake at 200°C for 15 minutes until just firm.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil and the butter in a saucepan, add the leeks and ⅓ cup of the stock, cover and cook over low heat until soft. Add the olives.

Combine the chopped tomatoes and their juice, remaining oil, garlic, remaining stock and sugar in a saucepan, season and simmer over medium heat until the mixture has a sauce consistency. Stir in the sage.

Cut the gnocchi into 2cm pieces and serve topped with tomato sauce, leeks and grated parmesan.

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*"Roast Beef, medium, is not only a food. It is a philosophy."**

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MAN OF MANY COLOURS

Chef Yotam Ottolenghi talks to **Joanna Savill** about his vibrant food and his new book – and we bring you a taste with four recipes

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CARAMELISED GARLIC TART
recipe page 116

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It was 2002 when the first Ottolenghi sign went up, outside a clean white space in Notting Hill with a wide window full of vividly coloured food. It was a food shop, pâtisserie, deli, restaurant, bakery – a place, to quote its owner and founder, "with no single description". He could have been talking about himself.

Yotam Ottolenghi resists labels. Born in Israel of an Italian father and a mother of German descent, he was a journalist then a pastry chef before becoming the darling of the Notting Hill/Islington/Belgravia food-to-go set and a best-selling cookbook author. He's also an all-round nice guy and, incidentally, a great mate of global New Zealander and fellow adopted Londoner Peter Gordon. Like Gordon, he sees no barriers to mixing flavours, techniques and food traditions. The results are effortless, simple yet surprising, and utterly appealing.

His is what Ottolenghi likes to call "sunny food". Almost Antipodean in its tone, it combines lots of vegetables, cheeses, pulses, herbs and fruit. And lots of lemon and garlic.

Mixed mushrooms are tossed with thyme, cinnamon and lemon; roasted eggplant dolloped with saffron yoghurt; a deceptively modest beetroot salad tossed with a hint of orange-blossom water. Meat, poultry and seafood are baked with herbs and greens. And more lemon and garlic.

And then there are the pastries and cakes, including the legendary giant meringues – pistachio and rosewater or cinnamon and hazelnut, enriched with dark muscovado sugar.

From 2002 and the first Ottolenghi shop – tiny, with a strong takeaway focus, only 10 seats in the rear and, as the website warns, "no loos" – there's now a little empire. The Belgravia shop is also small and the Kensington one even more minuscule – locals bring their own dishes to be filled with take-home bakes and pies.

The Islington Ottolenghi has a sit-in section, which is where I sit with the owner over coffee and muffins and an intriguing banana jam learned from one of his many Aussie employees.

"Things have evolved all the time over the past eight years," Ottolenghi tells me, "but we still have the same basic idea we started with – unfussy food, real food, making the best of what we have."

"We" is Ottolenghi and business partner/head chef Sami Tamimi – an Israeli and a Palestinian, brought together by food. They met while working at Chelsea's famed Baker and Spice – Ottolenghi as a pastry chef, Tamimi as a traiteur (in charge of ready-made, deli-style food). A couple more business partners later and they had their own little place, drawing on their love of Israeli/Arab flavours. And fabulous cakes.

The evidence of their skill is in the fresh, bold-bright piles of zucchini, beans, peppers, snowpeas and asparagus heaped on large white display plates – splashes of the Mediterranean on a dull London day.

It's not easy to conjure up tastes that are original yet workable, appealing yet easy to assemble. Yet that's what Ottolenghi does. The first Ottolenghi cookbook came out in 2008, another joint venture with Tamimi. With its generous recipes, extensive notes on ingredients such as coriander, tahini, pomegranates, za'atar and sumac – plus the recipe for those meringues – it was an instant best-seller and put the shops on Britain's culinary map.

"We were known to London foodies, but suddenly everyone knew us outside London, too," he marvels.

A self-confessed workaholic who loves writing, Ottolenghi has just released a second book, this time on his own. A compilation of recipes written for Britain's *Guardian Weekend* magazine under the title "The New Vegetarian" (although he isn't one), *Plenty* is Mediterranean

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN PORTRAIT & INTERIOR KEIKO OIKAWA; SMALL PORTRAIT JONATHAN LOVEKIN; CAKES & TARTS RICHARD LEAROYD

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PUY LENTIL GALETTES
recipe page 116

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in focus but features a few Asian dishes, too, inspired by travel to places such as Vietnam.

"Yotam creates food that's effortless and satisfying," says Peter Gordon, recently returned from a short trip to Israel with his friend. "It's rich in flavour and texture but really healthy in many ways."

The Israel trip was a return bout after they toured New Zealand a few months earlier. Each was impressed with the other's homeland – and with the food in particular.

"Travelling with Peter in New Zealand was the greatest privilege one can imagine," Ottolenghi relates. "It also revealed the origins of his food and the sources of his fusion cooking. It made it all make sense.

"And there is some sort of special Kiwi magic, a generosity of spirit and warmth that are just always there."

"We had a fantastic holiday in Israel," says Gordon, in turn. "We were discovering the 'new Israeli cuisine' – tahina, hummus, chickpeas, yoghurt, pickled lemons, lots of sesame and za'atar – all with such lightness yet density of flavours."

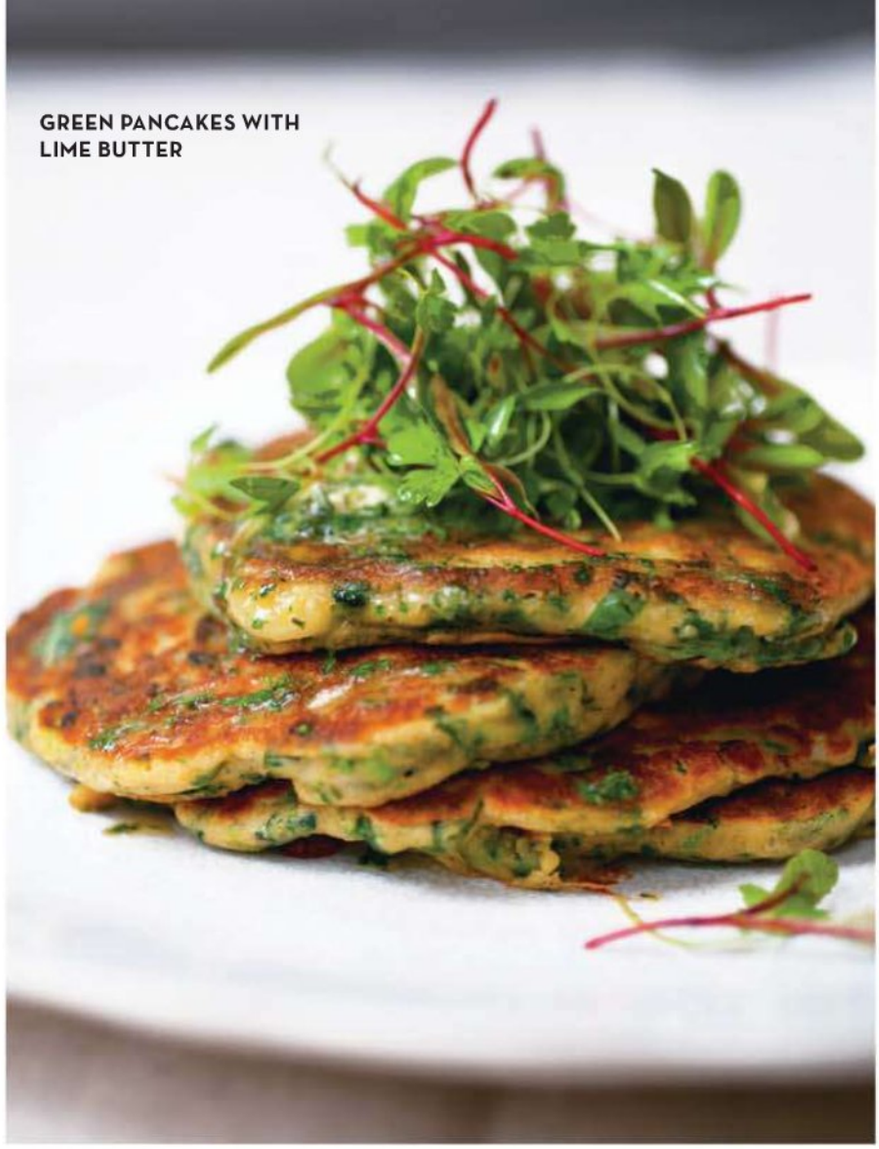
Next stop on Ottolenghi's itinerary will be a trip to Sydney for the World Chef Showcase, the highlight of the Sydney International Food Festival.

Joining Ottolenghi will be leading chefs from Beirut and Istanbul. "I am absolutely ecstatic about coming to Sydney and getting to meet people that do similar things to me," he says.

"Sydney's vibrancy and originality make it the perfect setting for a get-together of chefs from southern Europe and the Mediterranean. And everywhere else!"

One Sunday morning, I pass by the Islington Ottolenghi again and marvel at the queues of locals waiting for a table or to take away caramel-cornered roast vegetables or a flaky, cheesy, herb-strewn tart, or two. Apart from the very British propensity to stand in a queue, it's easy to understand why they'd bother.

The Sydney International Food Festival runs throughout October. The World Chef Showcase weekend is on October 9 and 10. For more details, see siff.com.au



GREEN PANCAKES WITH LIME BUTTER

GREEN PANCAKES WITH LIME BUTTER

SERVES 3-4

This recipe brought lots of compliments round my way after I first published it in 2008. I guess these pancakes are so comforting they somehow take you back to your childhood, when the joy of textures and flavours is still pure and unadulterated. Brunch is the ideal meal for them, served with a salad of seasonal leaves and possibly also a slice of freshly grilled haloumi or a piece of smoked fish.

Some lime butter will probably be left over. Keep it in the fridge and then smear it over a baked sweet potato.

250g spinach, washed
110g self-raising flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 free-range egg
50g unsalted butter, melted
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cumin
150ml milk
6 medium spring onions (100g in total), finely sliced
2 fresh green chillies, thinly sliced
1 free-range egg white
olive oil for frying

Lime butter

100g unsalted butter, at room temperature
grated zest of 1 lime
1½ tablespoons lime juice
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon white pepper
1 tablespoon chopped coriander
½ clove garlic, finely chopped
¼ teaspoon chilli flakes

Start with the lime butter. Put the butter in a medium bowl and beat it with a wooden spoon until it turns soft and creamy. Stir in the rest of the ingredients. Tip onto a sheet of cling film and roll into a sausage shape. Twist the ends of the film to seal the

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flavoured butter. Chill until firm.

Wilt the spinach in a pan with a splash of water. Drain in a sieve and, when cool, squeeze hard with your hands to remove as much moisture as possible. Roughly chop and put aside.

For the pancake batter, put the flour, baking powder, whole egg, melted butter, salt, cumin and milk in a large mixing bowl and whisk until smooth. Add the spring onions, chillies and spinach and mix with a fork. Whisk the egg white to soft peaks and gently fold it into the batter.

Pour a small amount of olive oil into a heavy frying pan and place on a medium-high heat. For each pancake, ladle 2 tablespoons of batter into the pan and press down gently. You should get smallish pancakes, about 7cm in diameter and 1cm thick. Cook for about 2 minutes on each side or until you get a good golden-green colour. Transfer to kitchen paper and keep warm. Continue making pancakes, adding oil to the pan as needed, until the batter is used up.

To serve, pile up 3 warm pancakes per person and place a slice of lime butter on top to melt.

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH SWEET SPICES, LIME & GREEN CHILLI

SERVES 4-6

Here's the most refreshing way I can think of to start a meal.

2 whole limes
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium butternut squash (about 900g)
2 tablespoons cardamom pods
1 teaspoon ground allspice
100g Greek-style yoghurt
30g tahini paste
1 tablespoon lime juice
1 green chilli, thinly sliced
10g picked coriander leaves
Maldon sea salt

Preheat the oven to 210°C. Trim off the limes' tops and tails using a small sharp knife. Stand each lime on a chopping board and cut down the sides of the fruit, following its natural curves, to remove the skin and white pith. Quarter the limes from top to bottom, and cut each quarter into thin slices, 1mm–2mm thick. Place them in a small bowl, sprinkle with a little salt, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, stir and set aside.

Next, cut the butternut in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds and discard. Cut each half, top to bottom, into 1cm-thick slices and lay them out on a large baking sheet lined with greaseproof paper.

Place the cardamom pods in a mortar and work with a pestle to get the seeds out of the pods. Discard the pods and work the seeds to a rough powder. Transfer to a small bowl, add the allspice and the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil, stir well and brush this mixture over the butternut slices. Sprinkle over a little salt and place in the oven for 15 minutes or until tender when tested with the point of a knife. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

Meanwhile, whisk together the yoghurt, tahini, lime juice, 2 tablespoons of water and a pinch of salt. The sauce should be thick but runny enough to pour; add more water if necessary.

To serve, arrange the cooled butternut slices on a serving platter and drizzle with the yoghurt sauce. Spoon over the lime slices and their juices and scatter the chilli slices over the top. Garnish with the coriander and serve.

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH SWEET SPICES, LIME & GREEN CHILLI

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Yotam Ottolenghi's food is effortless, simple yet surprising, and utterly appealing. It's what he likes to call "sunny food"

CARAMELISED GARLIC TART

SERVES 8

"I think this is the most delicious recipe in the world!" wrote Claudine after trying it out for me. What else can I add?

375g all-butter puff pastry
3 medium heads garlic, cloves separated and peeled
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
220ml water
¾ tablespoon caster sugar
1 teaspoon chopped rosemary
1 teaspoon chopped thyme, plus a few whole sprigs to finish
120g soft, creamy goat's cheese
120g hard, mature goat's cheese (such as Gruff Junction Selwyn Farmhouse Mature Goat Cheese)
2 free-range eggs
100ml cream
100ml crème fraîche
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Have ready a shallow, loose-bottomed, 28cm fluted tart tin. Roll out the puff pastry into a circle that will line the base and sides of the tin, plus a little extra. Line the tin with the pastry. Place a large circle of greaseproof paper on the bottom and fill up with baking beans. Leave to rest in the fridge for about 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the tart case in the oven and bake blind for 20 minutes. Remove the beans and paper, then bake for a further 5–10 minutes, or until the pastry is golden. Set aside. Leave the oven on.

While the tart case is baking, make the caramelised garlic. Put the cloves into a small saucepan and cover with plenty of water. Bring to a simmer and blanch for 3 minutes, then drain well. Dry the saucepan, return the cloves to it and add the olive oil. Fry the garlic cloves on a high heat for 2 minutes. Add the balsamic vinegar and water and bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 10 minutes. Add the sugar, rosemary, chopped thyme and ¼ teaspoon salt. Continue simmering on a medium flame for 10 minutes or until most of the liquid has evaporated and the garlic cloves are coated in a dark caramel syrup. Set aside.

To assemble the tart, break both types of goat's cheese into pieces and scatter in the pastry case. Spoon the garlic cloves and syrup evenly over the cheese. In a jug whisk together the eggs, creams, ½ teaspoon salt and some black pepper. Pour this custard over the tart filling to fill the gaps, making sure that you can still see the garlic and cheese over the surface.

Reduce the oven to 160°C and place the tart inside. Bake for 35-45 minutes, or until the filling has set and the top is golden brown. Remove from the oven and leave to cool a little. Then take out of the tin, trim the pastry edge if needed, lay a few sprigs of thyme on top and serve warm (it reheats well!) with a crisp salad.

PUY LENTIL GALETTES

SERVES 4

These may seem a bit outdated, reminiscent of the old vol-au-vents, but all good things eventually make a comeback and I am sure this modern version will score you many points on the imaginative-host scale. The lentils are also delicious on their own, without the puff base.

You can skip the toasting and grinding of the seeds, if you prefer, and use ready-ground spices instead; just halve the quantity.

200g Puy lentils
2 bay leaves
2 teaspoons cumin seeds
2 teaspoons coriander seeds
5 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra to finish
1 medium onion, roughly chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
250g Greek-style yoghurt
50g baby spinach
3 tablespoons chopped coriander
3 tablespoons chopped mint
juice of 1 lemon
400g best-quality puff pastry
1 free-range egg, beaten
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Cook the lentils in a litre of boiling water with the bay leaves for 20–30 minutes, or until thoroughly cooked. Drain in a sieve and set aside.

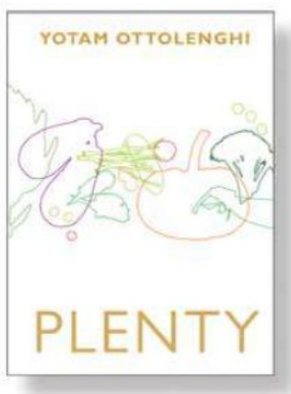
In a small frying pan, dry-roast the cumin and coriander seeds for 2 minutes, or until the aromas are released. Grind them using a pestle and mortar.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a small pan and fry the onion gently for 6-8 minutes, or until golden and very soft. Add the ground spices and garlic and cook for 2 more minutes. Mix this with the lentils and set aside to cool down. Once cool, stir in the yoghurt, spinach, herbs, lemon juice and remaining olive oil. Taste and add salt and pepper.

Roll out the puff pastry 3mm thick and cut out 4 circles about 8cm in diameter. Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Brush the pastry with the beaten egg and bake for 10–15 minutes, or until golden on top and underneath. Allow to cool slightly.

To serve, place the pastry discs in the middle of 4 serving plates. Pile up the lentils high on top so you can just see the edge of the pastry. Finish with a drizzle of olive oil.



Extracted from *Plenty* by Yotam Ottolenghi, published by Random House NZ. On sale 2 July, RRP $75.
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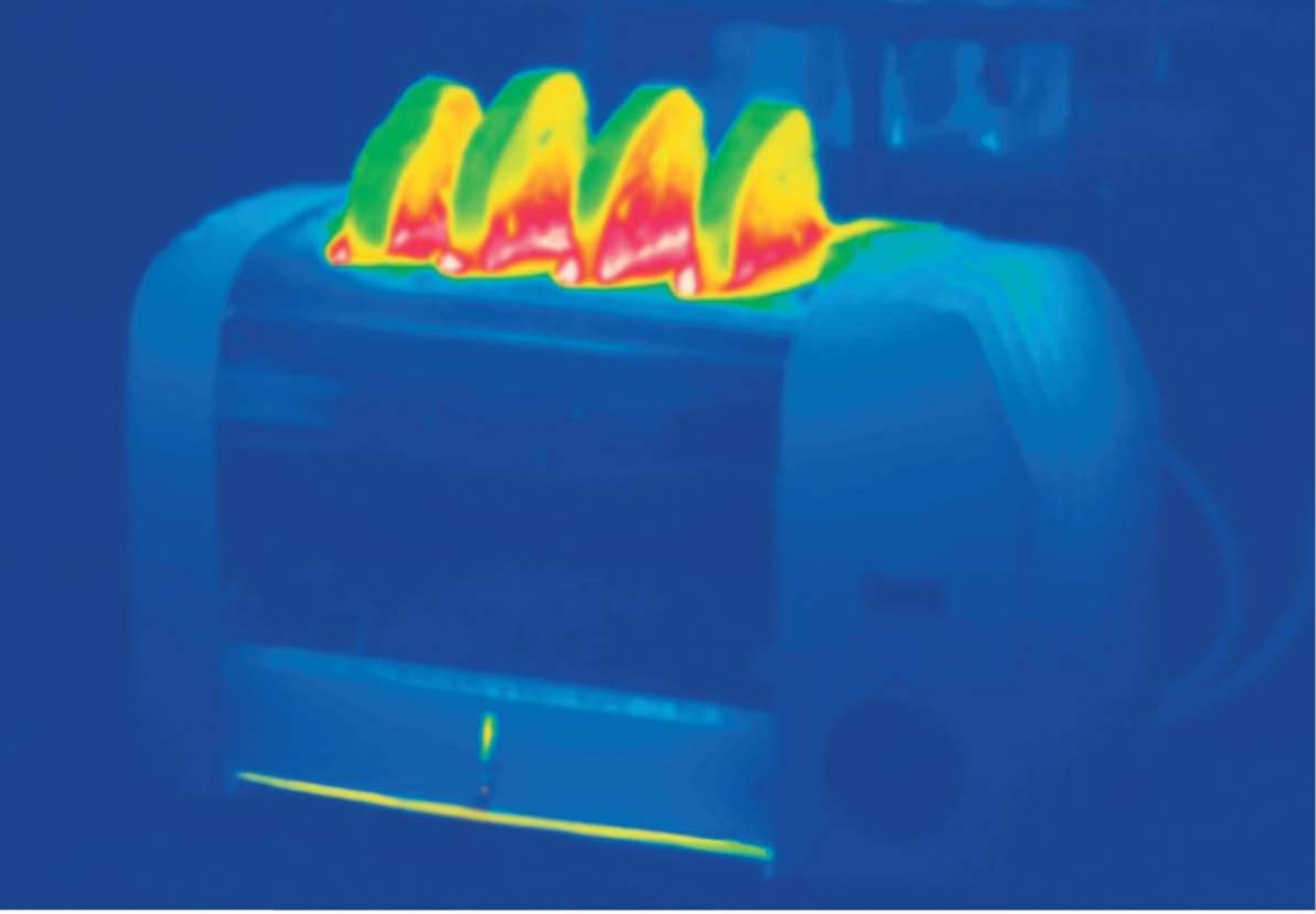
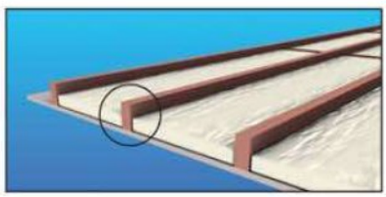
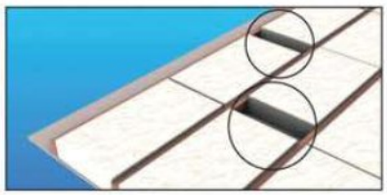


YOU CAN'T HAVE A HOUSE AS WARM AS TOAST IF YOU'VE GOT GAPS

HOTTEST HOT WARM COLD COLDEST



Ceiling insulation shouldn't be thin like this. It needs to be thick and above the joist.



Ceiling insulation can move over time. If there are gaps, put it back in position. Even small gaps can significantly reduce effectiveness of insulation.

New Zealand Government

This is a thermographic photo showing warmth and cold. The red, white and yellow areas show heat escaping through gaps in the top and bottom of a toaster.

Many New Zealand houses are just like this toaster, with heat escaping wherever it finds a gap. Efficiently heating your home and having properly installed ceiling and underfloor insulation is the most effective thing you can do, to live in a warm, comfortable home.

Insulation traps heat in. If your insulation is too thin, for example if it sits below the joists, or there are gaps, even small gaps, its effectiveness can be significantly reduced. Your house will be harder to keep warm and it will cost you more to heat. Make sure you check yours*. If your insulation isn't up to the task, or you don't have any, it could be time to get new insulation.

If your house was built pre-2000, you get 33% towards the cost of insulation, up to $1300, with Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart funding. Use our online tool to contact multiple providers in your area and arrange for a free no-obligation assessment.

*EECA recommends you seek professional advice when assessing insulation needs.

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course you can do it©

Jo Pearson prepares a simple yet impressive three-course dinner for six

shopping

GROCERIES

black mustard seeds
black peppercorns
coriander seeds
crème fraîche
eggs
extra virgin olive oil
golden sugar
ground coriander
ground cumin
haloumi
labneh (buy Canaan brand)
pomegranate molasses
puff pastry
rice flour
sumac
tinned chickpeas
tomato relish
unsalted butter

MEAT

sirloin steak

FRESH PRODUCE

cauliflower
cress (land cress or other variety)
feijoas
herbs: coriander, flat-leafed parsley, oregano
lemons
onion, brown
onion, red
rocket
vine-ripened tomatoes

STARTER

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER & HALOUMI FRITTERS

1 cauliflower, cut into florets
1 large onion, finely diced
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon each ground cumin and ground coriander
1 teaspoon black mustard seeds
1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander
finely grated zest of 2 lemons
¼ cup rice flour
2 eggs
200g haloumi, grated
sea salt and freshly black pepper
oil for frying

Preheat the oven to 175°C. Spread the cauliflower and onion on a roasting tray. Add the olive oil, ground cumin and coriander, and the mustard seeds. Toss together to coat the cauliflower. Roast for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

In a bowl, mix the fresh coriander, lemon zest, flour and eggs then beat well. Stir in the cauliflower mixture and haloumi, and season well. Fry heaped dessertspoonfuls of the mix in an oiled frying pan over medium heat until golden and cooked through (about 3 minutes each side).

Serve with spiced tomato relish and cress dressed with oil and vinegar.
Wine: Sauvignon Blanc

MAIN

SPICED SIRLOIN & CHICKPEA TABOULEH

2 tablespoons coriander seeds, toasted
1 tablespoon black peppercorns
1 tablespoon ground sumac
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
1kg sirloin steak, trimmed of sinew
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
6 vine-ripened tomatoes, seeded and sliced
1 red onion, diced
1 cup chopped flat-leafed parsley
¼ cup pomegranate molasses
juice of 1 lemon
1¼ cups extra virgin olive oil
sea salt to taste
rocket for serving
labneh for serving (Canaan brand)

In a mortar and pestle, combine the coriander, peppercorns, sumac, oil and oregano, and grind to a fine paste. Rub the steak with the spice paste and leave to marinate for a few hours or overnight.

Pulse the chickpeas in a food processor to coarsely chop. Combine with the remaining ingredients except the labneh and toss well.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. In a hot oiled pan, sear the steak on all sides then place in an oven dish and roast for 10 minutes. Remove and leave to rest for 10 minutes before slicing. Serve the chickpea tabouleh on a bed of rocket and arrange the beef on top. Serve with a bowl of labneh alongside.
Wine: Syrah

DESSERT

FEIJOA TARTE FINE

2 sheets butter puff pastry
50g unsalted butter, melted
12 large feijoas, peeled and finely sliced
golden sugar for sprinkling
crème fraîche for serving

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan-bake. Cut 6 x 10cm discs from the pastry sheets and arrange on a greased baking sheet. Brush each disc with melted butter. Arrange the sliced feijoas on the pastry, overlapping each piece slightly. Brush the top of the feijoas with melted butter and sprinkle with sugar. Bake for 20-30 minutes or until golden and the pastry is crisp. Serve immediately with crème fraîche.
Wine: Late-harvest Riesling

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT

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tips

- The cauliflower in the fritters can be substituted with roasted kumara or blanched carrot if you prefer.
- Lamb fillet, backstrap or chops would work well with the chickpea tabouleh as an alternative to beef.
- Any fruit in season could replace the feijoas on the tarte fine. A classic choice would be apples, but banana, peach or apricot would be just as good.

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citrus peel

There's more to fresh citrus fruits than flesh and juice. Their essential oils and aroma come from the peel. The inner white pith, however, is bitter and should be avoided. The exception here is when bitterness is a desired quality – when making marmalades, preserving lemons or limes, or making a pickle. As many citrus fruits are waxed to help their keeping qualities, the skin should always be thoroughly washed and dried before using.

Microplanes and the fine side of a grater are excellent for removing finely grated zest without the pith, which is useful in sweet dishes such as cakes, biscuits and icing. In savoury dishes it is often used in marinades, as part of a stuffing or as a flavour boost and freshener to finish a dish. Fresh zest can be frozen for later use.

Zesters tend to be used for long, thicker lengths of peel, often blanched two or three times, as they are more inclined to bitterness. Usually this is used in sweet dishes such as in syrups or to garnish a cake.

A vegetable peeler is often used to get larger, thicker lengths. Be sure to use a sharp knife to remove any white pith. Strips of peel like these are often used in stews, casseroles and stocks.

The peel can be dried (either leave out to dry at room temperature for a few days or it's easier to put it into a low oven for a few hours). It can then be ground and used as a condiment (such as sprinkling over fish before or after cooking) or in recipes where fresh zest isn't appropriate – in a dry rub for barbecue meats or to finish a sauce for a more subtle flavour than fresh. Dried orange peel (usually tangerine or mandarin) is often used in Chinese cookery for braised dishes and soups, and sometimes the peel is added to loose-leaf tea as it is thought to be an aid for digestion.

Gremolata, a mix of finely grated lemon zest, finely chopped parsley and garlic, is the classic Italian finish to a veal osso buco but also works well with other braised meats, fish and pasta. Sometimes orange peel is substituted for the lemon.

One of the more obvious uses for citrus is candying. A true glacé of fruit (often including the flesh) requires brining, rinsing and repeated simmering in sugar syrup over a number of days (or weeks) until the fruit is translucent before drying.

For a quick candied version, cut citrus peel into strips, place in cold water and bring to the boil. Cook for 1 minute then drain and repeat the process twice more (to remove bitterness). Place in a heavy sugar syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water) and cook until the fruit is soft and translucent. Drain well, cool on a silicon baking sheet and roll in caster sugar. Allow to dry in a low oven before storing in airtight containers for later use. Good when dipped in chocolate and dried.

■ GINNY GRANT

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Rasa Malaysia

the mee generation

Auckland has its Chinese, Christchurch Japanese, but in Wellington, Malaysian food is king, writes **David Burton**

For many years, there were more Malaysian restaurants in Wellington than the rest of the country put together. While Auckland has recently begun to catch up, the capital is still the leading centre with 23 – not counting takeaway bars, food courts and cafés that offer the occasional Malaysian speciality. Roti chenai, mee goreng and curry laksa are as familiar to Wellingtonians as fish and chips.

Along Cuba St, the Malaysian restaurants are practically wall to wall, each with their own fanatical followers, ready to diss the rest. Most of the cafés are fairly tiny, so on a Friday night in the Cuba Quarter, they are often at capacity, and at a 45-seater like Rasa Malaysia, they'll take your cellphone number and suggest you go somewhere for a drink and they'll call when a table is ready.

"And they do come back," says Selvy Madasamy at Roti, "when they could have easily gone somewhere else."

So how did this love affair come to be? In the decade ending in 1998, thousands of Chinese Malaysian immigrants arrived in New Zealand, most in Auckland. Many opened Chinese restaurants, competing with ethnic Chinese restaurateurs from Singapore and Hong Kong. One plausible theory is that, sensing the oversupply in Auckland, many canny Malaysian latecomers turned instead to Wellington and began to open Malaysian restaurants.

In doing so, they built on the wildfire success of the trailblazing Satay Malaysia and Satay Kampong.

When Rajah Vellasamy opened Satay Malaysia in Courtenay Place in 1990, there were just two other Malaysian restaurants in Wellington – a famously good Peranakan-run place called Selera, and the less distinguished Yuyi.

The son of an immigrant from southern India, Rajah had grown up in Kuala Lumpur. A Hindu, he had willed himself to learn to cook the hard way, from a series of Indian Muslim street hawkers, working long hours for no pay.

Each day, as dusk fell, multitudes of hawkers would set up their carts in the city's car parks, each with two tables and chairs for customers. Most specialised in just one dish and, since they did it over and over, they perfected the art and often became quite famous.

They were also hard taskmasters. "They would push you around," he recalls, "getting you to clean up and wash dishes. Then one day they might teach you a small part of a dish, then push you around again, before revealing a little more.

"So it all came slowly, but at the end of the day, you'd learned it all properly." This was during the 1980s, before the government forced the hawkers off the streets and into covered food centres.

By working for one hawker after another like this, Rajah eventually mastered the arts of roti chenai, mee goreng and fish curry.

Satay Kampong, the other trailblazer, is today a rather swish licensed restaurant in Allen St, but it had humble beginnings – as a lunch bar around the corner in Wakefield St, selling pies and sandwiches.

Founder Kok Kwoon Lim had been a panelbeater back in Kampar, but he was also a gifted satay cook, having learned the technique from a Malay friend. To drum up more business, he suggested his wife bring out some of her mother's recipes for rendang, Hainanese chicken rice and laksa.

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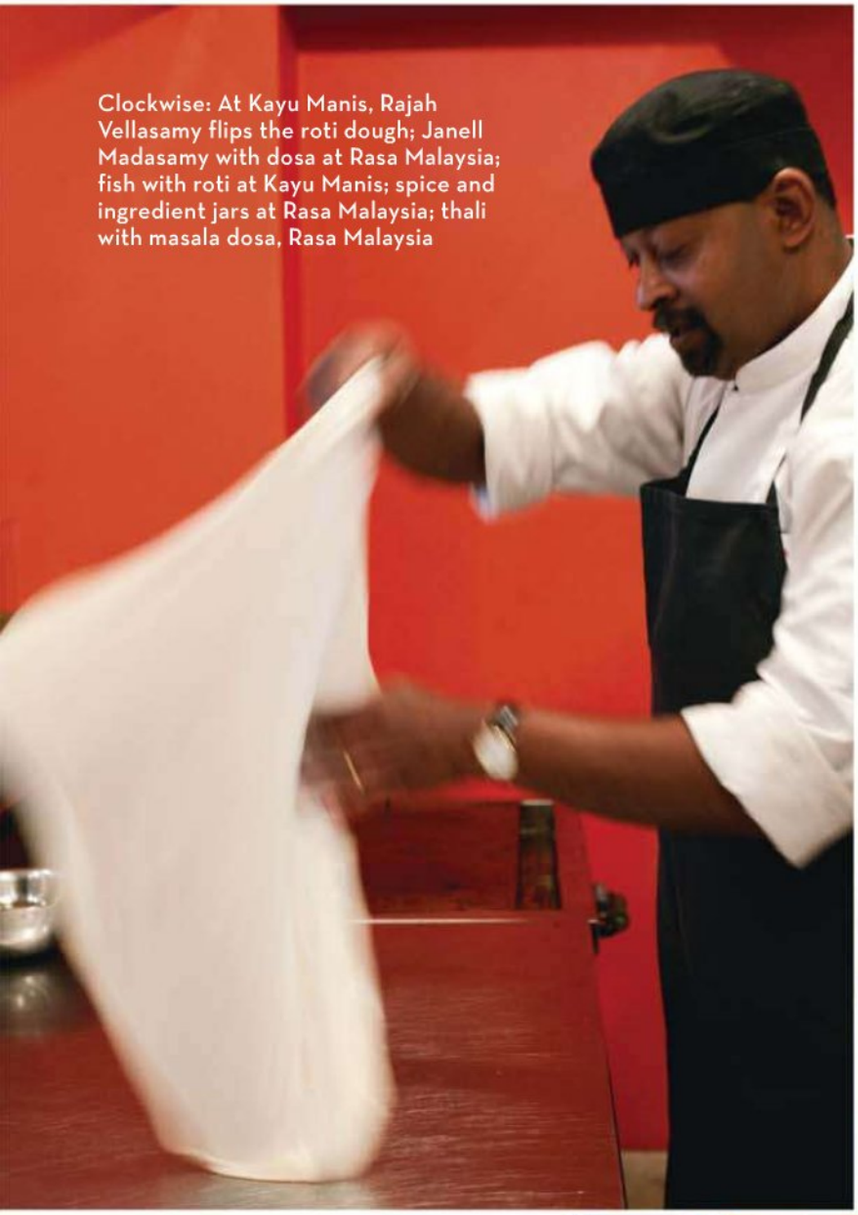

Clockwise: At Kayu Manis, Rajah Vellasamy flips the roti dough; Janell Madasamy with dosa at Rasa Malaysia; fish with roti at Kayu Manis; spice and ingredient jars at Rasa Malaysia; thali with masala dosa, Rasa Malaysia

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT

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Know your roti

Every Malaysian restaurant in Wellington serves the thin flaky bread known variously as roti chenai or roti canai. Consisting simply of flour, sweetened condensed milk, oil, salt and a little sugar (as made in New Zealand, often too much), the dough is flipped and thrown dramatically into the air to stretch it wafer thin, before being folded in on itself and fried on a grill.

A descendant of southern Indian paratha, the bread is still known as roti prata in Singapore. In Malaysia the name roti chenai arose because the immigrant Tamils who made it had sailed from the southern Indian port of Chennai (formerly Madras).

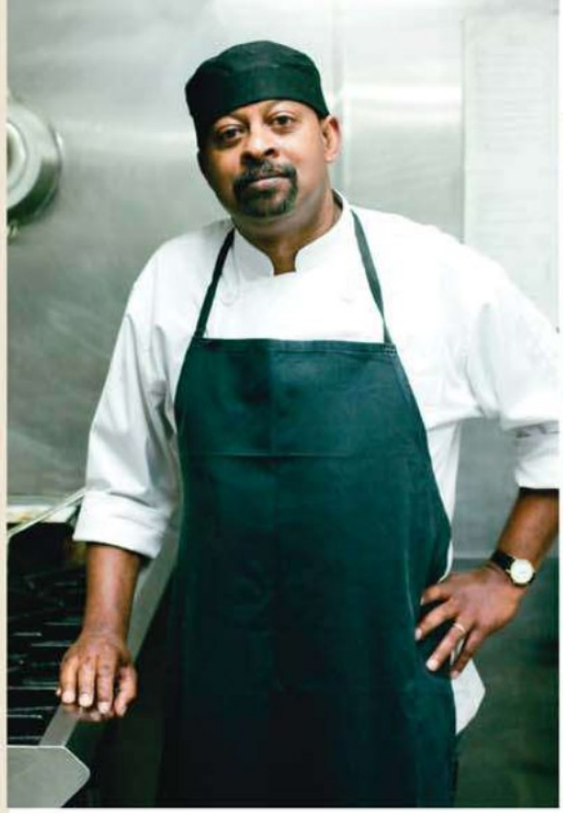
In Malaysia, roti chenai is the preserve of ethnic Indian restaurants and food hawkers, whereas in New Zealand, Chinese Malaysian restaurants also offer the bread, though they mostly buy it in, ready cooked, to save costs. Otherwise, they would need to hire a full-time roti chef to make it to order.

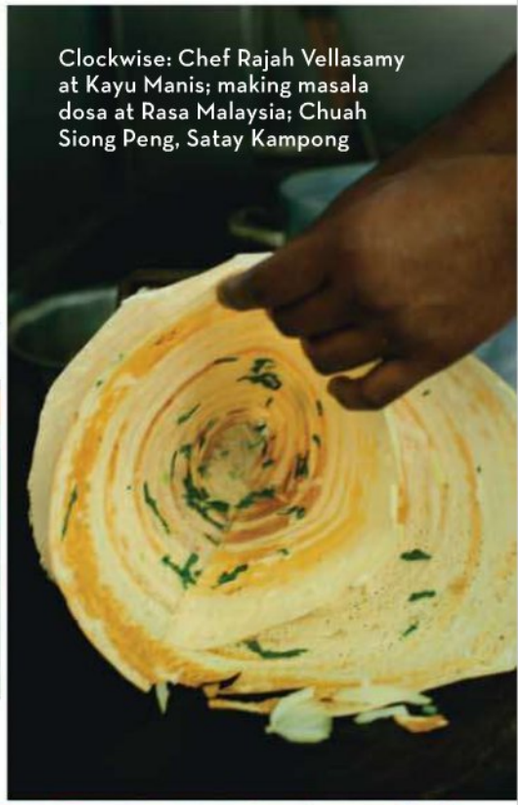
You can always tell the bought-in, reheated version: after sitting around for many hours or even days, it has turned leathery on the outside and doughy and squidgy in the middle.

Nevertheless, every Malaysian restaurant feels it must have roti and, such is its popularity among Wellingtonians, at least six production kitchens throughout the region manufacture roti chenai for supply. This is a little-known fact, which suits the industry nicely.

The leading supplier of these is a Chinese Malaysian restaurateur who reputedly turns out some 2000 roti chenai a week. To save time, these roti are simply stretched out on a bench, rather than being flipped in the air – a shortcut that shows in the final product.

To get authentic, fresh roti chenai in Wellington, go to the restaurants where they have the roti maker out in the front of house, entertaining the public with their performance art – places such as Kayu Manis, Roti Chenai, Rasa Malaysia and Satay Malaysia.





Clockwise: Chef Rajah Vellasamy at Kayu Manis; making masala dosa at Rasa Malaysia; Chuah Siong Peng, Satay Kampong

The laksa recipe, still in use today, is in the style of Ipoh, using dry spices and a lot of coconut cream. As for the rendang recipe, Kok's daughter-in-law Jenny concedes it has been adapted, with less chilli used in New Zealand and, because Kiwis don't get the concept of a dry curry, "we sometimes give more sauce".

Today, the vast majority of Wellington's Malaysian restaurants are run by ethnic Chinese, who in Malaysia are best known for their noodle dishes, such as laksa. Malaysian Indians, on the other hand, are famous for the dishes they brought over from southern India, such as roti chenai and idli.

Many Indian-owned Malaysian restaurants will offer a combination of Malaysian and South Indian fare. Perhaps the best known is Roti Chenai in Victoria St, a former Mexican café (still with the Mexican masks on the wall!) that since 1994 has been nourishing students and office workers with a bargain lunch of two pieces of roti chenai with a choice of curry for, currently, $8.

The founder, Richard Rajasekar, today spends much of his time in India, pursuing a budding career as a movie villain (see him in action in *Jaggubhai*), having left the business in the hands of his sister Vijayalakshmi.

Over in Cuba St, Silas Madasamy makes the crisp South Indian pancake, masala dosa, in much the same way as his mother used to in Penang, the difference being that the batter (partially fermented rice and urad dal) is ground not by hand, but in a $6000 Maharaja dosa mixer.

The strand of Malaysian cooking not well represented in Wellington (or New Zealand generally) is Malay. It's not surprising: in 2006, of the

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14,547 Malaysian residents in New Zealand, only 3540 were Malay.

To help put matters right, the Malaysian government provided Norulhuda Basri and her mother-in-law with a loan to set up Kayu Manis in Cuba St, as Wellington's only Malaysian restaurant to offer Malay specialities. The loan was part of the Malaysia Kitchen scheme, designed to spread Malaysian culture overseas via food and cookery.

The current maître d' at Kayu Manis, Shirley Go, is also there under the Malaysia Kitchen scheme, doing work experience as part of a degree in food studies for Putra University, Malaysia. For head chef, they turned to Wellington veteran Rajah Vellasamy.

Among the many Malay specialities at Kayu Manis not seen elsewhere in Wellington is ayam percik panggang (chicken cooked in a spicy sauce, then removed and chargrilled). Again, alone in Wellington, this really is a charcoal grill, with live embers.

As to the chefs, Rajah says he hires Malays whenever he can. "But they don't last – they get homesick and go home."

Vijayalakshmi Rajasekar, Roti Chenai

Top ten

1 KAYU MANIS
201 Cuba St, ph: 04-382 8627, kayumanis.co.nz
In the former Orsini's, it offers Malay dishes not seen elsewhere. The décor is a notch above the rest.

2 ROTI CHENAI
120 Victoria St, ph: 04-382 9807, rotichenai.co.nz
A Wellington lunchtime institution, packed with students and workers digging into roti and curry. The masala dosa is also good.

3 RASA MALAYSIA
200 Cuba St, ph: 04-384 7088
Excellent masala dosa and idli, served in a small but brightly atmospheric café, with a cycle and tiffin carrier mounted on the wall.

4 SATAY KAMPONG
16-18 Allen St, ph: 04-384 7594
One of Wellington's first Malaysian restaurants, still serving great mee goreng and the city's best Hainanese chicken rice. The curry laksa is better than the seafood laksa – and cheaper.

5 PALMS MALAYSIAN BISTRO
230 Jackson St, Petone, ph: 04-589 3066, palmsmalaysian.co.nz
Suburban newcomer, in upscale surroundings, doing excellent sup kambing (mutton soup), lacy roti jala pancakes and a well-presented entrée platter

6 CINTA MALAYSIAN KITCHEN
119 Manners St, ph: 04-385 8622
Worthy stayer owned by a Chinese family from Kedah. The curry laksa, rendang and mee goreng are all dependable; King prawn tom yum laksa is weird but good, while the kung po beef is so delicious, it rivals KK Malaysian's.

7 KK MALAYSIAN RESTAURANT
54 Ghuznee St, ph: 04-385 6698
Cramped but popular cheapie, not only for the usual Malaysian staples but Chinese classics like char kway teow and kung po beef and chicken.

8 ISTANA MALAYSIA
1-5 Allen St, ph: 04-801 7989, istanamalaysia.co.nz
Indian-owned, offering interesting Indian takes on Malaysian classics, such as rojak, and Malaysian takes on Indian classics, such as dalcha.

9 SATAY PALACE
165 Cuba St, ph: 04-801 5719
Don't let the tired décor distract from the worthy cuisine.

10 SATAY KINGDOM
Shop 212, Left Bank, Cuba Mall, ph: 04-381 3730
Well patronised, much praised and fiercely defended by students and bohos, but probably more on account of price (dirt cheap) than quality (what you pay for, you get). Interior is shabby and spartan – eat outside in the mall.

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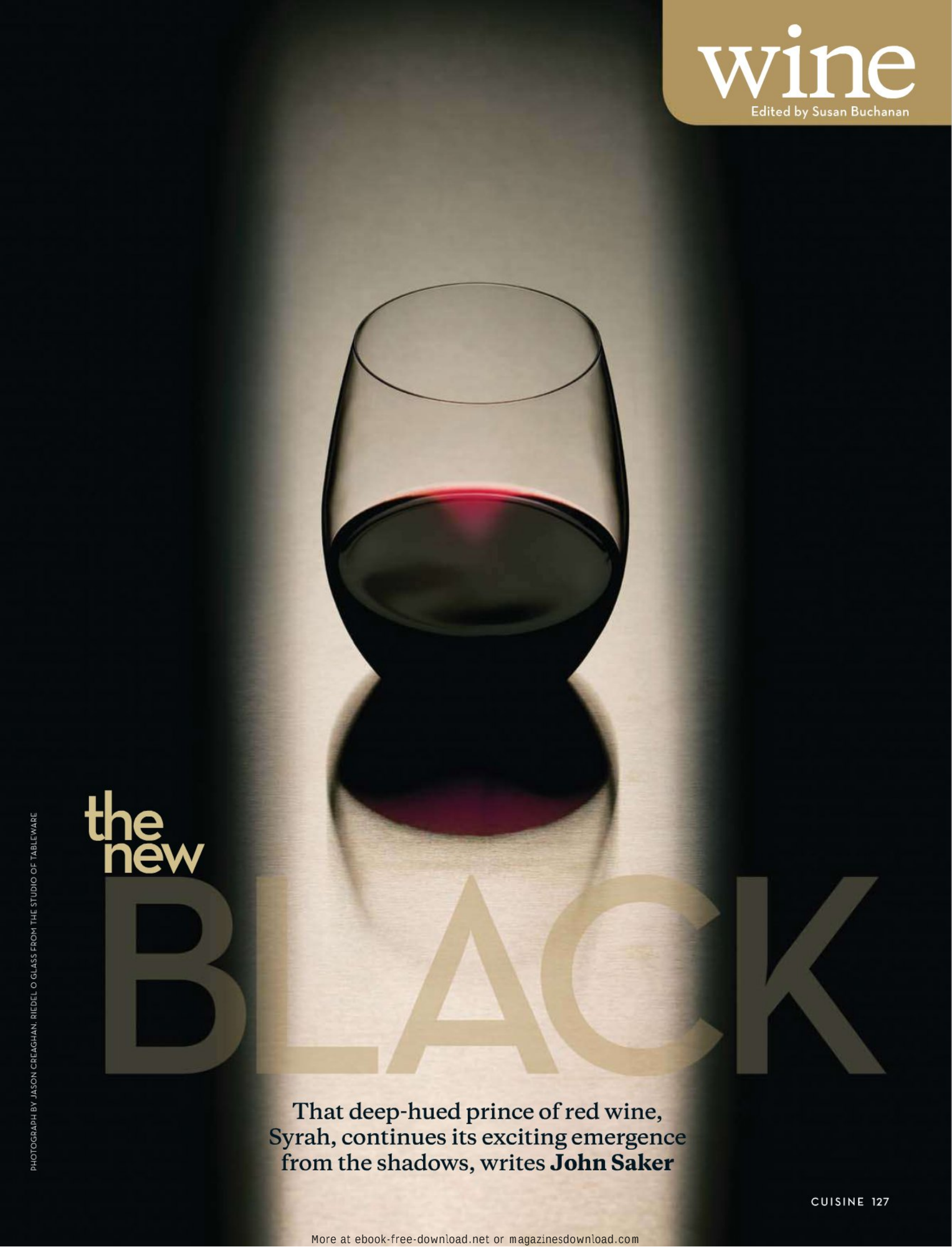

the new BLACK

That deep-hued prince of red wine, Syrah, continues its exciting emergence from the shadows, writes **John Saker**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON CREAGHAN. RIEDEL O GLASS FROM THE STUDIO OF TABLEWARE

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SYRAH ON THE UP

In the space of a decade, Syrah has gone from being a sideshow to a showstopper, with our best wines praised around the world for their elegant combination of vivacity, depth and complexity. The vignerons of Hawke's Bay, the epicentre of the country's small but arresting "Syrahquake", have been on a fast learning curve. Their move away from heavier styles to more balanced, fragrant wines in a short time is applauded by our panel at this tasting, which sees 17 wines achieve four stars or more from a total of 60. Just three wines (two from Waiheke Island and one from Martinborough) join the expected Hawke's Bay landslide. Says *Cuisine* panel chair, John Belsham, "Given the consistent high quality that our best producers are now releasing, it is perplexing that Syrah has been such a late bloomer in this country. This tasting confirms that New Zealand Syrahs at the top level are not just exciting – they're exhilarating."

TOP 5

1. ★★★★★ TRINITY HILL HOMAGE SYRAH 2007 $120
2. ★★★★★ COOPERS CREEK SELECT VINEYARDS CHALK RIDGE HAWKE'S BAY SYRAH 2008 $28
3. ★★★★★ VILLA MARIA CELLAR SELECTION HAWKE'S BAY SYRAH 2008 $30.99
4. ★★★★★ MILLS REEF ELSPETH TRUST VINEYARD SYRAH 2007 $36-$40
4. ★★★★★ TRINITY HILL GIMBLETT GRAVELS SYRAH 2008 $34

BEST BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ COOPERS CREEK SELECT VINEYARDS CHALK RIDGE HAWKE'S BAY SYRAH 2008 $28

★★★★★ TRINITY HILL GIMBLETT GRAVELS SYRAH 2008 $34

★★★★★ VILLA MARIA CELLAR SELECTION HAWKE'S BAY SYRAH 2008 $30.99

★★★★½ CRAGGY RANGE SYRAH GIMBLETT GRAVELS VINEYARD HAWKE'S BAY 2008 $29.95

★★★★ MATARIKI SYRAH 2007 $26.90

★★★★ SELAKS WINEMAKER'S FAVOURITE SYRAH 2008 $20.99

TASTING RESULTS

5 STARS OUTSTANDING	5
4½ STARS EXCELLENT	5
4 STARS VERY GOOD	7
3 STARS GOOD	13
NO AWARD	30
TOTAL	**60**

"New Zealand Syrahs at the top level are not just exciting – they're exhilarating. Our top wine is one of the best Syrahs I've ever tasted in this country" John Belsham

TASTING PANEL Three illuminati joined regular panel chair John Belsham of Foxes Island Wines (far right) to shed light on our dark and fragrant Syrah entries. They were (from left) experienced Australian judge and writer Ralph Kyte-Powell, John Hancock of Hawke's Bay's Trinity Hill Wines, and associate judge Andrew Parkinson, fine-wine specialist at Negociants New Zealand. The same panel also reviewed our Shiraz entries (see page 134).

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1 TOP NZ SYRAH

★★★★★

TRINITY HILL HOMAGE SYRAH 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $120 - 10+

Homage, indeed. John Belsham spoke for the entire panel in describing our top Syrah as "beautiful – flawless, precise and complete". He then added: "It's one of the best Syrahs I've ever tasted in this country." The wine's thrilling floral scents and mélange of blackberry and blueberry flavours conjured thoughts of summer pudding; its fine-grained, elegant structure drew comparisons with Pinot Noir. Such a juicy, fresh personality would get along famously with sweet venison, thought Andrew Parkinson.

TOP WINE PROFILE

SPIELBERG'S "SPOILED CHILD"

Trinity Hill co-founder John Hancock created this label to pay homage to the great Rhône Valley producer Gérard Jaboulet, who died in 1997 and for whom John worked a vintage. But since the first Trinity Hill Homage Syrah was produced with the 2002 vintage, a great many tributes have been flowing the other way.

H-listers – Homage devotees – now include the likes of film director Steven Spielberg, who was smitten by the 2006 while working on the *Tin Tin* movie in New Zealand last year. Spielberg pre-ordered five cases of the 2007.

It's a devotion shared by the winemakers: "You could call it the spoiled child of the cellar," says the man who has had a hands-on role in all four Homage Syrahs so far, Warren Gibson, whose favourite is still the 2002 – "with the 2007 close behind, and the 2006 close behind that".

Two different vineyards on Gimblett Gravels supply fruit that is carefully scrutinised before being deemed fit for Homage duty. If standards aren't met, as in 2008, Homage is not made.

Homage Syrah is co-fermented with a small portion of Viognier, the amount varying from year to year. For the 2007, it nudged 10 per cent. "That's as high as we'd like," says Gibson. "Each time we just want to make the best wine, and that's what '07 gave us. It's perhaps the most approachable Homage we've made... great concentration and floral aromatics."

5

2 ★★★★★ **COOPERS CREEK SELECT VINEYARDS CHALK RIDGE HAWKE'S BAY SYRAH 2008 $28** - 6 BEST BUY

Adding Viognier to Syrah has a gender-bending effect – it becomes more feminine. The prettiness of this wine's floral, cologne-like aromatics owes much to a Viognier contribution, which also lightens and brightens the palate. A pure, slightly toasty, delight that would be a great match for lamb roasted with herbes de Provence.

3 ★★★★★ **VILLA MARIA CELLAR SELECTION HAWKE'S BAY SYRAH 2008 $30.99** - 7 BEST BUY

Call it the "mailman" – vintage after vintage, this wine always delivers. The latest release shows typical richness in fruit and structure. A flowing core of red and dark berry fruit is well supported by grainy, yet sensual, tannins. A seductive, compelling wine.

SYRAH GOES WITH...

Pairing food with Syrah used to be as easy as throwing a T-Bone or chorizo on the barbecue. The dark, sturdy, brooding Syrahs of five to 10 years ago really did beg for one of those classic Syrah matches: red meat, sausage or game.

But the change toward lighter styles, many of which have a touch of Viognier in the mix, has broadened Syrah's table capabilities. Our top two Syrahs, for example, would be as suitable with a seafood risotto as they would with venison sausage.

Here are some fine Syrah food partners:

- Beef
- Lamb (try to avoid the classic vinegary mint sauce, which is not wine-friendly)
- Classic chargrilled burgers
- Venison
- Wild pig (if you don't have a friendly hunter-gatherer, try to find one)
- Sausage (the stronger and richer the better)
- French cassoulet
- Charcuterie
- Duck
- Moussaka
- Tuna and salmon steaks
- Smoked fish pie

BOTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CREAGHAN; PORTRAIT BY KEN DOWNIE

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4= ★★★★★ **MILLS REEF ELSPETH TRUST VINEYARD SYRAH 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $36-$40** 🍷-8

The ideal conditions of the 2007 vintage and a little Mills Reef magic combined to produce this ripe, swashbuckling, masculine style. Concentrated dark fruit is laced with nutmeg oak spice, with a slight gunflint note adding interest. Such a big, ripe, velvety wine would be a worthy partner for a hearty beef dish.

4= ★★★★★ **TRINITY HILL GIMBLETT GRAVELS SYRAH 2008 (HAWKE'S BAY) $34** 🍷4-7 BEST BUY

An overture with a strong red carnation and violet theme leads through to a charming, fruit-led mouthful. Ripe but not jammy, with exuberant red and dark fruit flavours, this is Syrah in a lighter, more refined vein. "A great modern style," says John Belsham. Match it to a mushroom risotto.

4½

★★★★½ **COTTAGE BLOCK HAWKE'S BAY SYRAH 2007 $38** 🍷5-7

This one creeps up on you. It appears quite restrained and demure at first, but before you know it you're in a muscular embrace. Wonderful sweet fruit and spicy richness, together with a well-organised structure, make for a very complete wine. Bring it out for that winter solstice dinner. [B]

★★★★½ **CRAGGY RANGE SYRAH GIMBLETT GRAVELS VINEYARD HAWKE'S BAY 2008 $29.95** 🍷-10 BEST BUY

Belief in the variety's suitability to Hawke's Bay, great vineyard sites and careful viticulture are behind Craggy Range's success with Syrah. There is a juicy poise to this rendition, with its scents of dark roses, liqueur cherry flavours and gentle texture. "Mouthfilling, layered, lovely," notes John Hancock.

★★★★½ **ESK VALLEY WINEMAKERS GIMBLETT GRAVELS SYRAH 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $60.99** 🍷-12

Winemaker Gordon Russell revelled in the dark, ripe fruit he had in 2007, using it to fabulous effect in this handsome wine. It's a bit of a Bill Gates – rich and powerful – with an accompanying sense of style. The tannins are firm and very long. Try it alongside veal chops grilled with sage.

★★★★½ **MILLS REEF ELSPETH SYRAH 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $36-$40** 🍷-8

Elspeth was the mother of Mills Reef supremo Paddy Preston, and her name is only attached to the best vintages. Ralph Kyte-Powell is full of praise for this wine's "lovely texture and integration... and it's so succulent". Attractively floral and smoky, it would be terrific matched with grilled, marinated lamb backstraps.

★★★★½ **MUDBRICK VINEYARD RESERVE SYRAH 2008 (WAIHEKE ISLAND) $50-$55** 🍷-5

Opaque in the glass, this wine has a syrup-like intensity. Cassis, blackberry and a dab of spice take hold early and coat the mouth. The structure is fine and soft, balancing the sweet fruit beautifully. It's the kind of wine you could happily open at the end of a working week, fire roaring.

THE PINOT-FICATION OF SYRAH

The increasing similarities between the floral aromatic fireworks of our best Syrah and Pinot Noir have often been noted. Helping achieve that has been a move by Syrah producers towards a more Pinot-esque approach.

"We started off treating Syrah the way it was made 15 years ago in the Rhône Valley," says Trinity Hill's John Hancock.

"More recently, we've learned from Pinot. We've paid a lot of attention to crop levels and treated the fruit with kid gloves, because our Syrah fruit is fragile – they're not like Aussie Shiraz grapes. Less racking is also part of the Pinot recipe, as is reducing as much as possible any contact with oxygen in the wine. Oxygen is the enemy of fragrant wines."

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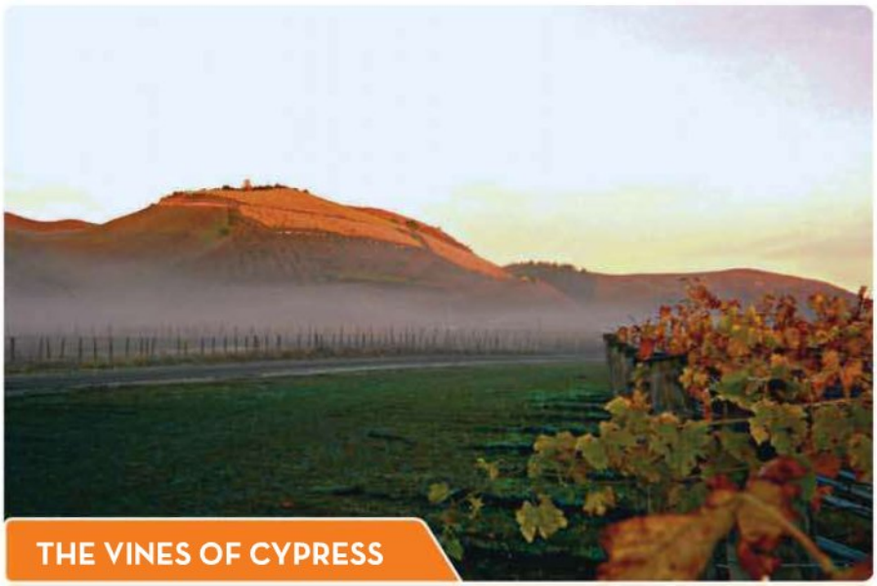
The panel applauds a move to more balanced, fragrant styles

★★★★ **CAMBRIDGE ROAD SYRAH 2008 (MARTINBOROUGH) $63** -12
On the Martinborough Terrace, this tiny new producer grows only Syrah and Pinot Noir. Pinot, in fact, has a small presence (nine per cent) in this wine. Endearing floral and pepper notes, a keen acidic edge and a light touch point to the cool-climate origins. "Supple, open and very comfortable," notes John Belsham.

★★★★ **CYPRESS TERRACES SYRAH 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $39-$40** -7
Fascinating aromas (there's even a hint of coffee) beckon you in to a very agreeable, ripe, spicy place. The abundance of fruit is supported by rich, boisterous tannins, while the sweetish influence of American oak adds another layer of complexity. Serve it with the classic Sunday roast (lamb or beef).

★★★★ **MATARIKI SYRAH 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $26.90** 5-7
BEST BUY
The Matariki constellation becomes visible on the horizon in mid-winter, which would be a great time to try this Matariki star. Elegance is the word: in the mouth it is spicy, fine and mellow with layers of flavour. What to have with it? Try lamb shanks with parsnip mash.

★★★★ **SELAKS WINEMAKER'S FAVOURITE SYRAH 2008 (HAWKE'S BAY) $20.99** -4
BEST BUY
Selaks perennially delivers great value with this wine. It's dark, full of flavour – boysenberry, with a little dried herb – and displays a juicy, wholesome purity. The texture is on the firm side. It would be superb with a pizza topped with smoky bacon. [A]



THE VINES OF CYPRESS

When Gus Lawson planted vines on a hillside above Hawke's Bay's Gimblett Gravels 10 years ago, he and wife Melanie were seeking new challenges after many years growing grapes on the horizontal gravels below, where they had been instrumental in establishing Te Awa winery.

To signal the new beginning, Gus also planted cypress trees among the vines. He was drawn to their Mediterranean looks, negligible shade and the fact they were unattractive as hangouts for grape-hungry birds.

The trees also gave the Lawsons the name for their new wines. As well as the four-star Syrah, the Cypress Terraces range includes a Chardonnay and a Viognier using fruit grown on the steep site.

OLD VINE PULL

Lance Redgwell was chasing vintages around the world when he heard Martinborough producer Murdoch James was selling its old Fraser Block on Cambridge Rd. "The chance to work with 20-year-old vines... that drew me back."

The first vintage for his new Cambridge Road label was 2007 and his 2008 Syrah scored four stars in our tasting.

The block is planted in both Syrah and Pinot Noir, and Redgwell has been trying out blends of the two. "There's something about the site," he says. "I would love to make a wine that simply spoke of the place, a kind of field blend in the rustic Italian tradition.

"Blending these varieties also has some historical legitimacy. In the late 19th century William Beetham's Lansdowne Claret [made near Masterton] was a blend of Syrah, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. So it's not new."

What is new, however, is his winery and Redgwell knows the scale he wants to achieve: "1000 cases a year, maximum". A cellar door will open soon.

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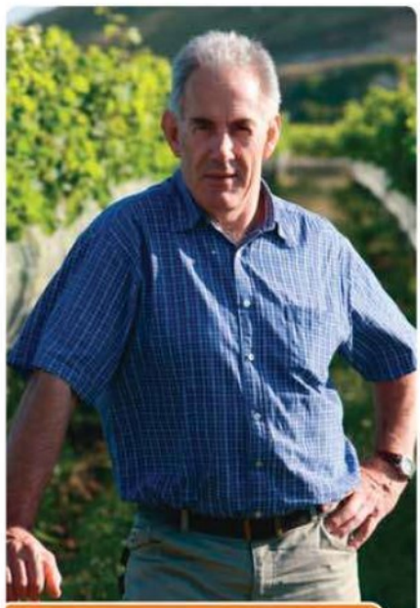
I'M SORRY
that the fresh ginger fibers in my sauces get caught in your teeth because I don't use imported powder

Spicing up winter with mouth warming flavours

nz syrah



NURSE SEES RED

Andy Nurse has moved a long way from his days as a marauding loose forward for Hawke's Bay (1977-80). He now works in development and planning for the wine industry, and is managing director and a stakeholder in Two Gates, a new label that has scored from the kick-off. Its début Syrah, the 2007, was awarded four stars in this tasting.

The Two Gates vineyard (yes, you guessed it, there are two entrances) is in the heart of the Gimblett Gravels and the focus is monochrome – red all over.

"We think this terroir is suited to Syrah and the Bordeaux varieties," says Andy. "Our vision is to make high-quality, organic [both vineyard and wine are BioGro certified] wines from these varieties."

Now there's a man who knows his game-plan.

In the space of a decade, Syrah has gone from being a sideshow to a showstopper...

★★★★ **SQUAWKING MAGPIE GIMBLETT GRAVELS THE STONED CROW SYRAH 2008 (HAWKE'S BAY) $39.95** 10-12
Dark as octopus ink and dense as molasses (almost), there is a rich, overflowing quality to this blockbuster. Cloves and blackcurrants play roles in a rich, complex, flavour profile. There was some discussion about the firm tannins: cellaring for a few years is advised.

★★★★ **TWO GATES SYRAH 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $55** -12
This new label has produced a wine that gets the job done without any show-pony antics – very like the way its managing director, Andy Nurse, used to play in his rugby days. It is deep, long and lengthy, with lovely sweet fruit and an overlay of toasty oak.

★★★★ **WEEPING SANDS WAIHEKE ISLAND SYRAH 2008 $29-$32** 5-10
You'll be weeping with happiness over this offering from Obsidian Vineyard's second-tier label. Deep in colour, its heady floral perfumes, fabulous dark-fruit flavours and sheer purity show off beautifully what Waiheke can do with Syrah. Try it with venison sausages.

For complete wine-tasting listings visit **cuisine.co.nz** (three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed, contact the distributor (listed by letter).
[A] Constellation NZ, ph: 0800-662 456
[B] Pernod Ricard NZ, ph: 09-336 8300

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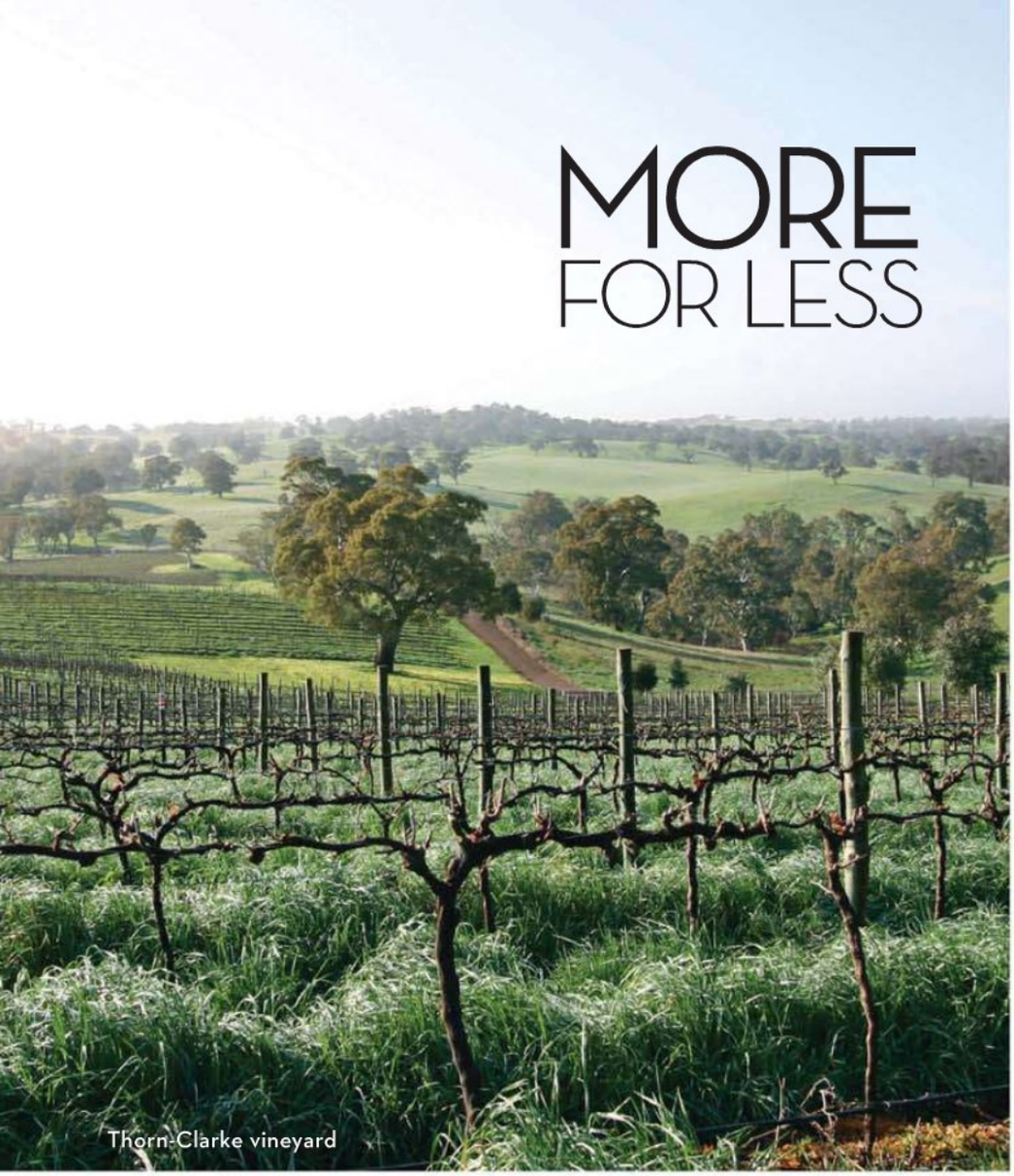

Thorn-Clarke vineyard

Australian reds have always delivered great value, but never have so many offered so much for so little, writes **Ralph Kyte-Powell**

Perhaps as a result of the economic crisis and oversupply issues in parts of Australia, we saw a surge in the number of sub-$25 wines entered in our annual Shiraz tasting. More than half fitted in that price category and, if you think you have to compromise on quality by spending less, think again. Three of our "Top 5" sell for less than $21, good buying in anybody's language.

A trend towards less powerful, friendlier Shiraz was also evident. The muscular blockbusters that once would have dominated such a line-up, have, to a notable extent, given way to wines "without elbows", as one of our panellists put it.

The majority weren't heavy, super-alcoholic, overly sweet or formidably tannic. Instead soft textures, fine flavours, less heat and less machismo were the order of the day.

TASTING PANEL The New Zealand Syrah panel also did duty for Australian Shiraz: John Belsham led the tasting, joined by Ralph Kyte-Powell, John Hancock and associate judge Andrew Parkinson.

TOP 5

1. ★★★★★ THORN-CLARKE SANDPIPER BAROSSA SHIRAZ 2008 $18-$20
2=. ★★★★★ GRANT BURGE FILSELL OLD VINE SHIRAZ 2008 $45-$50
2=. ★★★★★ PENFOLDS THOMAS HYLAND SHIRAZ 2007 $17-$21
4. ★★★★★ JOHNNY Q SHIRAZ VIOGNIER 2008 $16-$18
5. ★★★★★ WOLF BLASS PRESIDENTS SELECTION SHIRAZ 2006 $24-$30

BEST BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ JOHNNY Q SHIRAZ VIOGNIER 2008 $16-$18

★★★★★ PENFOLDS THOMAS HYLAND SHIRAZ 2007 $17-$21

★★★★★ THORN-CLARKE SANDPIPER BAROSSA SHIRAZ 2008 $18-$20

★★★★½ WYNDHAM ESTATE BIN 555 SHIRAZ 2008 $13-$17

★★★★ 30 MILE SHIRAZ 2008 $14-$15

★★★★ JOHNNY Q SHIRAZ 2008 $16-$18

★★★★ KINGSTON ESTATE SHIRAZ 2008 $14-$15.50

★★★★ PENFOLDS KOONUNGA HILL SHIRAZ 2008 $14-$17

★★★★ YALUMBA "Y SERIES" SHIRAZ VIOGNIER 2008 $14-$17

TASTING RESULTS

5 STARS OUTSTANDING	6
4½ STARS EXCELLENT	4
4 STARS VERY GOOD	11
3 STARS GOOD	28
NO AWARD	35
TOTAL	**84**

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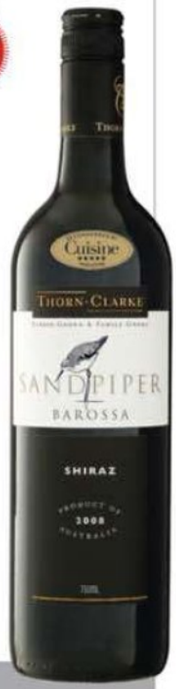
1 TOP AUSTRALIAN SHIRAZ

★★★★★

THORN-CLARKE SANDPIPER BAROSSA SHIRAZ 2008 $18-$20 (BAROSSA VALLEY, SA) 1-6

BEST BUY

This top-notch Barossa Valley Shiraz is also an absolute winner in the value stakes. Glass-staining, generously built, deeply satisfying red wine like this would normally command a much higher price. It's still a bit closed up and unevolved, so while it's great now, it will improve over the next five or so years. At the price, you would be silly not to put a few bottles away. The delicious ripe-berry character of lovely purity is skilfully interwoven with a deft mocha-like seasoning of oak. It tastes smooth and rich, with excellent structure, soft tannins and perfect balance. Ideal with hearty winter fare. [G]



TOP WINE PROFILE

GOOD BAROSSA GENES

The Barossa Valley boasts some of Australia's best-known wine brands, most harking back to family vineyards set up in the early days of the South Australian colony in the mid-19th century. Beside such illustrious names as Saltram, Yalumba, Orlando and St Hallett, Thorn-Clarke may be little known, but the roots of this enterprise have a similar long history in the region.

The Thorn family has grown grapes in the Barossa Valley for more than 120 years, while the Clarkes were pioneers in gold mining. The families were united by the marriage of Cheryl Thorn and David Clarke, and a sixth generation of involvement in Barossa wine has arrived in the person of their son, current general manager Sam Clarke. Thorn-Clarke has grown to be the largest family-owned Barossa wine business, sourcing grapes from its own estates. Its success in the past decade has been based on honest wines of outstanding quality, many selling for astonishingly low prices. The best wines use traditional grape varieties such as Riesling, Shiraz and Cabernet, and the brand has become a byword for Barossa regional identity and great value.

The top wine in our Shiraz tasting is a worthy example and an absolute bargain.

5

2= ★★★★★ **GRANT BURGE FILSELL OLD VINE SHIRAZ 2008 $45-$50 (BAROSSA VALLEY, SA)** 2-10

Grant Burge Filsell performs consistently well in our Australian Shiraz tastings. It's a lovely ripe style, just made for roast meats. Appealing aromas of spice, boysenberry and plum introduce an intense, full-bodied palate. The wine shows some alcoholic warmth but it's not out of context. [B]

2= ★★★★★ **PENFOLDS THOMAS HYLAND SHIRAZ 2007 $17-$21 (SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BLEND)** 1-4

BEST BUY

This medium-bodied, intense Shiraz bears the Penfolds quality thumbprint in a reasonably priced package. It opens with ripe boysenberry and plum-like fruit, with a whisper of eucalypt and a well-measured veneer of sweet oak. [C]

The muscular blockbusters give way to wines "without elbows"

SHIRAZ GOES WITH...

As with most wine and food matching, the "weight" of the wine involved is a good guide for what to serve it with. Full-bodied, hearty wines need full-flavoured, robust food; delicate dishes are best with elegant, lighter wine types. So it is with Shiraz. If you are going to serve a thick rump steak, perhaps with a red wine sauce, go for a big brawny wine, possibly a South Australian from a warmer climate or vintage. Poultry or game needs a wine from a cooler region that has less body and more tang. The less full-bodied types can also work well with spicy food, so be prepared to experiment – Shiraz is versatile at the table.

- Roast beef
- Game
- Rare steaks
- Braised oxtail
- Peking duck
- Peppery grilled chicken
- Good sausages
- French cassoulet
- Roasted winter vegetables
- Barbecued meats

BOTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CREAGHAN

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THE ITALIAN LINK

The names of the owners and winemakers in the sun-drenched Riverina region of New South Wales offer a pretty strong clue to the community's background: names such as Robert Fiumara, Darren De Bortoli, Phillip Casella, Dominic Piromalli, Bill Calabria, Sam Trimboli, James Ceccato, Robert Bruno and John Quarisa.

Get the idea?

The Italian flavour is an example of how much modern Australia owes to the rich cultural origins of its many immigrants over the past two centuries or so.

For a start, Australians of Italian and Chinese descent revolutionised the Australian table, challenging Anglo-Irish Aussies to ditch a diet of grey, dried-out lamb chops in favour of pasta, pizza and Peking duck, and the country has never looked back.

For the Italians, wine was a natural part of the equation, so it's not surprising they have played a key part in recent winemaking history.

4 ★★★★★ **JOHNNY Q SHIRAZ VIOGNIER 2008 $16-$18 (SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA)** 3

BEST BUY

This elegant, fresh, fragrant wine has floral, berry and liquorice characters of great aromatic quality, no doubt due in part to the five per cent Viognier. It tastes persistent and tangy with a firm tannin backbone. Try it alongside lamb with Middle Eastern flavours. [F]

5 ★★★★★ **WOLF BLASS PRESIDENTS SELECTION SHIRAZ 2006 $24-$30 (SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BLEND)** 3

A good companion to slow-braised beef, this Shiraz is already starting to show some maturity. It's attractively textured and balanced, combining refined floral qualities with depth of berry fruit and well-measured oak. [C]

★★★★★ **PENFOLDS BIN 28 KALIMNA SHIRAZ 2007 $24-$30 (SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BLEND)** 8

Bin 28's lineage goes back to the legendary Max Schubert's red wine experiments at Penfolds in the 1950s and 60s. The 07 is a worthy descendant, seamless, complex, aromatic and full of flavour. Notable sweet oak doesn't obscure the ripe fruit. Serve it at a classy barbecue. [C]

★★★★½ **CORIOLE REDSTONE SHIRAZ 2007 $25-$26 (McLAREN VALE, SA)** 5

McLaren Vale is a great source of generously built Shiraz, such as this ripe, spicy version. Appealing aromatic qualities lead through a mouthfilling palate that lingers in the mouth. Don't fuss with food – home-made pizza with onions, anchovies and cheese sounds just right. [H]

★★★★½ **GEMTREE UNCUT SHIRAZ 2008 $27-$29 (McLAREN VALE, SA)** 5

A ripe, modern expression of Shiraz, this combines ripe red and black fruit characters with a thread of high-toned sappy American oak. Savoury, minty and floral notes add dimension, and the flavour is generous and ripe. Great with chargrilled rare steak. [A]

★★★★½ **WYNDHAM ESTATE BIN 555 SHIRAZ 2008 $13-$17 (SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA)** 2

BEST BUY

Wyndham Estate reds are often marked by distinct fruit sweetness, but this example seems noticeably less so. Dark berries, mint and herbal aromas meet the nose, and the palate is velvety with ripe, generous flavour and a balanced finish. Good with a richer pasta dish. [E]

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★★★★½ **YALUMBA PATCHWORK SHIRAZ 2008 $20-$24 (BAROSSA VALLEY, SA)** 🍷-4
The Yalumba name is a guarantee of quality, especially on Barossa Shiraz. Inky and dense but not heavy, this crowd-pleasing style suits a big occasion dish like a fillet of beef. Deep blackberry jam and chocolatey elements introduce it deliciously, and the soft palate is succulent and well balanced. [D]

★★★★ **D'ARENBERG THE FOOTBOLT SHIRAZ 2007 $22-$26 (McLAREN VALE, SA)** 🍷-6
A great match for a hearty steak and kidney pie, this medium-bodied, smooth Shiraz has lifted fruit on the nose reminiscent of juicy berries with lightly earthy touches and a hint of mint. Fruit dominates and oak takes a back seat. [D]

★★★★ **DEAD LETTER OFFICE SHIRAZ 2007 $30-$34 (McLAREN VALE & PADTHAWAY, SA)** 🍷-4
This wine shows traditional South Australian qualities. The juicy blackberry, malty and meaty characters verge on porty, and creamy vanillin oak dresses it up appropriately. The palate is smooth and soft. Try it with a concentrated, slow-cooked Irish stew. [F]

4

★★★★ **30 MILE SHIRAZ 2008 $14-$15 (SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA)** 🍷-2
BEST BUY
A likeable, affordable young red ready to drink now, perhaps with chargrilled meats. Boysenberry, wine gum and raspberry jam aromas lead the way with touches of spice. It has medium body with flavours that are slightly porty but uncomplicated and satisfying. [F]

If you think you have to compromise on quality by spending less, think again... three of our "Top 5" sell for less than $21, good buying in anybody's language

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Lamb Casserole – Persian Style

Fragrant spices and the fruity flavours of apricots and pomegranate add a hint of the exotic to this easy lamb casserole.

Prep 25 minutes
Cook 60 minutes
Serves 6-8

1.2 kg lamb shoulder cut into 4 cm chunks, excess fat removed
2 tbsp oil
2 medium onions, finely diced
1 tsp turmeric
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
4 cardamom pods, roughly crushed to break the skin
2 tbsp tomato paste
2 tsp pomegranate molasses
*500g **Essential Cuisine Lamb Stock** (2 x 250g pouches)*
salt and pepper
1 cup dried apricot halves
2 tbsp each of fresh mint leaves and chopped pistachio nuts, to garnish

Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a large heavy saucepan. Season the meat and quickly brown over high heat in batches. Transfer to a platter as it browns and put to one side.

Add remaining oil then add onions to the pan, stirring over medium high heat until lightly browned. Add spices, tomato paste and pomegranate molasses and stir over the heat for a further minute.

Mix in the ***Essential Cuisine Lamb Stock***, stirring to lift all the pan brownings. Season to taste. Return the meat to the pot along with the dried apricot halves.

Cover and simmer gently for 40-45 minutes or until meat is very tender. Season to taste.

Serve garnished with torn mint leaves and chopped pistachio nuts. Accompany with rice and roast pumpkin wedges.

Recipe by Annabel Langbein

*Look for us in the cold shelf or butchery department in leading supermarkets and fine food outlets or go to **www.essentialcuisine.co.nz***

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★★★★ **GRANT BURGE MIAMBA SHIRAZ 2007 $30-$35 (BAROSSA VALLEY, SA)** 🍾-5
Grown on a great old vineyard site inexplicably uprooted in the 1970s before being replanted by Grant Burge in the 1980s, Miamba 07 offers ripe, plummy fruit with hints of spice and beetroot. It's generously built, but not heavy, with an easy-going personality. [B]

★★★★ **JOHNNY Q SHIRAZ 2008 $16-$18 (SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA)** 🍾-2 BEST BUY
Spaghetti with veal ragù shared with good friends is all you need to make this smooth wine complete. Aromas of currants, berries and a whisper of eucalypt mark the nose. Sweet berry fruit and a little alcoholic heat make it an attractive, no-fuss proposition. [F]

★★★★ **KINGSTON ESTATE SHIRAZ 2008 $14-$15-50 (MT LOFTY RANGES & LIMESTONE COAST, SA)** 🍾-3 BEST BUY
Winemaker Bill Moularadellis knows how to put value in a bottle. There's complexity and interest in this young, succulent, modern-style Shiraz with spicy fruit, chocolatey aromas, light oak and a long silky palate. Try with a beef stir-fry. [G]

★★★★ **PENFOLDS KOONUNGA HILL SHIRAZ 2008 $14-$17 (SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BLEND)** 🍾-6 BEST BUY
The original 1976 Koonunga Hill was a Shiraz Cabernet blend, but now the label has many permutations, all reliably good. This wine kicks off with succulent boysenberry and spiced plum aromas, lightly seasoned with sweet oak. The medium-bodied palate is tasty with a lip-smacking finish. [C]

★★★★ **PILLAR BOX RESERVE SHIRAZ 2008 ($23-$25) (PADTHAWAY, SA)** 🍾-4
The panel differed over this wine's "reduced" character, a by-product of winemaking that sometimes adds an earthy, sulphide-like element. That aside, Pillar Box has a core of sweet plummy fruit, sharpened by a black pepper-like tang. It's middleweight, long-flavoured and smooth. [F]

★★★★ **WILLUNGA 100 SHIRAZ VIOGNIER 2006 $27-$28 (McLAREN VALE, SA)** 🍾-2
Viognier is a trendy addition to Shiraz that can be overdone, but is nicely poised here. Jammy blackcurrant aromas have seasonings of spice and pepper. Good fruit concentration and a medium body with silky soft tannins. Easy to like. [H]

★★★★ **WYNNS COONAWARRA ESTATE SHIRAZ 2008 $17-$21 (COONAWARRA, SA)** 🍾-8
Wynns has been making quality wines since it re-energised the great Coonawarra wine region more than 50 years ago. Its latest Shiraz has ripe, spicy aromas with real depth and power. There's a vanillin overtone and a plump, berry-flavoured, long-lasting palate. [C]

★★★★ **YALUMBA Y SERIES SHIRAZ VIOGNIER 2008 $14-$17 (BAROSSA VALLEY, SA)** 🍾-3 BEST BUY
Another bargain from Yalumba, this shows how Viognier adds new dimensions of fragrance and softness to Shiraz when skilfully used. It's a surprisingly elegant drop with spice, blossom, blackberry, cassis and liquorice aromas that are deliciously fragrant. It's medium-bodied, silky and soft. [D]

WATCH YOUR Ps & Qs

Italian-heritage winemakers have been responsible for many an Australian wine innovation. Darren De Bortoli pioneered sweet whites with botrytis influence; Phillip Casella took Australian wine exports to a new high with the creation of Yellow Tail; Fred Pizzini helped take Italian grape varieties mainstream.

John Quarisa, alias Johnny Q, may be another to watch. His red wines have impressed *Cuisine*'s wine judges as giving "plenty of bang for your buck", and his latest wines continue in that vein, perhaps even more so. Reflecting their maker and his mantra, "You just can't take life too seriously", Johnny Q wines have made their mark as approachable, versatile and excellent value for money.

Great value launched Australian wines in spectacular style on to the world market and wines such as the Johnny Q range show that the value is still there.

For complete wine-tasting listings visit **cuisine.co.nz** (three-star results are listed only on the website)

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To source wines listed, contact the distributor (listed by letter).
[A] Epicurean Wines, ph: 09-638 5000 **[B]** Eurowine, ph: 04-472 2638
[C] Foster's NZ, ph: 09-638 2277 **[D]** Negociants NZ, ph: 09-531 5222
[E] Pernod Ricard NZ, ph: 09-336 8300 **[F]** Procure Liquor,
ph: 09-376 9385 **[G]** Vintage Wines & Spirits, ph: 09-480 0789
[H] Vintners NZ, ph: 09-621 0210

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Ph: 09-486 6415
first-glass.co.nz
Wed 30 June 7pm
$15 (no bookings)

Glengarry Victoria Park
Ph: 0800-733 505
glengarry.co.nz
Sat 3 July
12pm-4pm (free)

La Barrique
Ph: 09-638 5000
Fri 2 July 4pm-6pm

Waiheke Wine Centre
Ph: 09-372 6139
waihekewinecentre.co.nz
Mudbrick Vineyard
126 Church Bay Rd
Thu 15 July 6.30pm
Bookings essential

HAMILTON
Hamilton Wine Company
29 Hood St
Ph: 07-839 1190
Wed 14 July
6.30pm $15
Bookings essential

HAVELOCK NORTH
Advintage
Ph: 06-877 9754
advintage.co.nz
Fri 9 July
3pm-5.30pm (free)

WELLINGTON
Glengarry Thorndon Quay
Ph: 04-472 7051
glengarry.co.nz
Sat 3 July
12pm-4pm (free)

CHRISTCHURCH
Vino Fino
Ph: 03-365 5134
vinofino.co.nz
Tues 20 July 6pm

TASTING NOTES

★★★★★
Outstanding quality

★★★★½
Excellent quality

★★★★
Very good quality

★★★
Good quality (website listings only)

Drink now, don't cellar

-2 Drink now or cellar for up to two years from now

Not ready for drinking yet

Tasting method All wines are tasted blind. If, after discussion, the tasters do not agree on a star rating, the wine will receive the rating given by the majority but dissenting comments will be included in the wine notes. The scores of winemaker judges cannot exceed those of other judges.

Availability All wines entered in *Cuisine* tastings must be readily available at the time of publication. However, high demand and a six-week lead time between tastings and publication can affect availability. If you cannot find the wines, contact the winery or distributor direct.

Prices Suppliers are asked to provide a retail price range for all wines entered in tastings. Prices do vary between vineyard and low-to-high volume outlets and cannot, therefore, be guaranteed. All prices are quoted in $NZ.

Recommended by *Cuisine* stickers Look for these top wines as your guarantee of quality.

Gold sticker Wines awarded five stars can wear the gold five-star Recommended by *Cuisine* sticker.

Burgundy sticker Wines awarded 4 1/2 and four stars can display the familiar burgundy Recommended by *Cuisine* sticker.

275g packet Regal Salmon Fresh Cuts Stirfry
3 tablespoons black bean sauce
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon rice bran oil
1 carrot, cut into thin strips
1 cup broccoli florets
1 cup cauliflower florets
1 red capsicum, sliced thinly
100g mangetout or sugar snap peas, cut into thin strips
1/4 cup black beans, tinned – rinsed and drained (optional)
1/4 cup bamboo shoots, sliced thinly
1/2 cup mung bean sprouts
To serve: rice noodles

Mel's Regal Salmon Fresh Cuts and Black Bean Stirfry

Serves 2

1. Drizzle the salmon pieces with the black bean sauce, and leave to marinate for 10 minutes. Heat the rice bran oil in a wok over a high heat. Place the salmon pieces in with the skin side down. Cook until the skin is crispy. Turn over the pieces to quickly cook the other side. Remove the salmon and leave to one side.
2. Heat the sesame oil and add the carrot, broccoli, cauliflower, red capsicum, mangetout, black beans and bamboo shoots. Cook until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Add the sprouts and return the salmon to the pan. Toss carefully to incorporate. Serve on top of rice noodles.

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RENAISSANCE MAN

It took just one glass to convince Tony Robb he was in the wrong career, writes **John Saker**

In 1967 the Corbans celebrated their wine company's 65th birthday, probably over a few bottles of their then-famous Riverlea Riesling or Cellarman's Port. That same year, the man who now makes the wines that bear their name was born. Tony Robb doesn't take lightly his custodianship of what is one of the oldest brands in New Zealand.

At a tasting after his Cottage Block Chardonnay 2006 won the inaugural Champion Sustainable Wine Trophy at the 2007 Air New Zealand Wine Awards, he was quietly thrilled when Brian Corban, grandson of founder Assid Corban and current chairman of Ngatarawa winery, told him how impressed he was with the wines.

"The family have not been involved for decades, of course, but they keep a weather eye on the brand," Robb says.

"The Corbans name does have meaning for me, in part because I've worked here for so long. I'm always tasked with ensuring our best wines deliver on that legacy."

Corbans provided Robb with his first wine job, in 1997, as a lab assistant in its Marlborough winery, but his road to wine was far from direct. After leaving school in Christchurch midway through his seventh-form year "because the hockey season was finished and I was bored", Robb joined an IT firm, which proved far from boring.

"The IT industry was young... everything was changing at a rate of knots. It was like working a vintage 12 months of the year, having to make good decisions quickly, dealing with whatever the week threw at you."

Behind the computer frontlines, Robb would sometimes kick back with a glass of Blue Nun (we're in the 1980s, remember). One day, a colleague treated him to something different. As he drained his first glass of Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon, Robb felt his faith in the smiling sisters of Liebfraumilch evaporate. "That bottle of Vasse Felix opened my eyes," he remembers. "After that I started seeking out different wines, learning more about it." That revelation would lead to

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Corbans' Redstone Vineyard

postgraduate studies in wine science at Lincoln then, not long after, the lab position in Marlborough.

Once again he found himself in a vocational hothouse, an industry that was on the move and offering plenty of opportunity. By 2000 he was an assistant winemaker, by 2004 he was Corbans' senior winemaker.

Things weren't static on the social front, either. In his second vintage he met another winemaker, Katherine, now his wife and mother of baby daughter, Bailey.

"I'm extremely fortunate that she is experienced in the demands of winemaking," Robb says.

"She completely understands when I'm gone for 16-17 hours a day during vintage."

The requirements of another wine partnership – that with food – has strongly influenced his winemaking. "I tend to only drink wine with food, so for the majority of wines I make, suitability with food is always a consideration. It requires careful handling of oak, which can sometimes smother the palate, making it hard to taste the subtleties on the plate. And acid balance is always critical. Not only should a wine drink well on its own, but it should retain enough acidity to refresh and revitalise the palate for the next mouthful of food.

"When I'm cooking I'm always experimenting and trying something new and this philosophy is equally true of my winemaking."

In 2000 the Corbans brand was bought by Montana, which itself then came under the wing of Pernod Ricard. Despite the tumult at the top, the winemakers were given licence and encouragement to unlock their potential.

With Robb in charge, it didn't take long before a Corbans renaissance was being hailed and Robb became a Hawke's Bay player to watch.

Sixty different wines are produced in the Corbans winery on the edge of Napier, including the excellent value Homestead range, but Robb's proudest achievements are his "effort balls" – the Cottage Block and Private Bin wines, for which he has been given "free rein".

"To a degree I use Private Bin to experiment with different techniques," he says. "For Cottage Block, I want to capture what we have in the vineyard. There's nothing added. It's unfined and unfiltered, just fermented grape juice really... It's really a case of less is more."

The panel awarded 4½ stars to Cottage Block Hawke's Bay Syrah 2007 in our annual New Zealand Syrah tasting (see page 127).

VINEYARD PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD BRIMER

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travel

Edited by Susan Buchanan

PHOTOGRAPH KIERAN SCOTT

ELEPHANT HILL, HAWKE'S BAY

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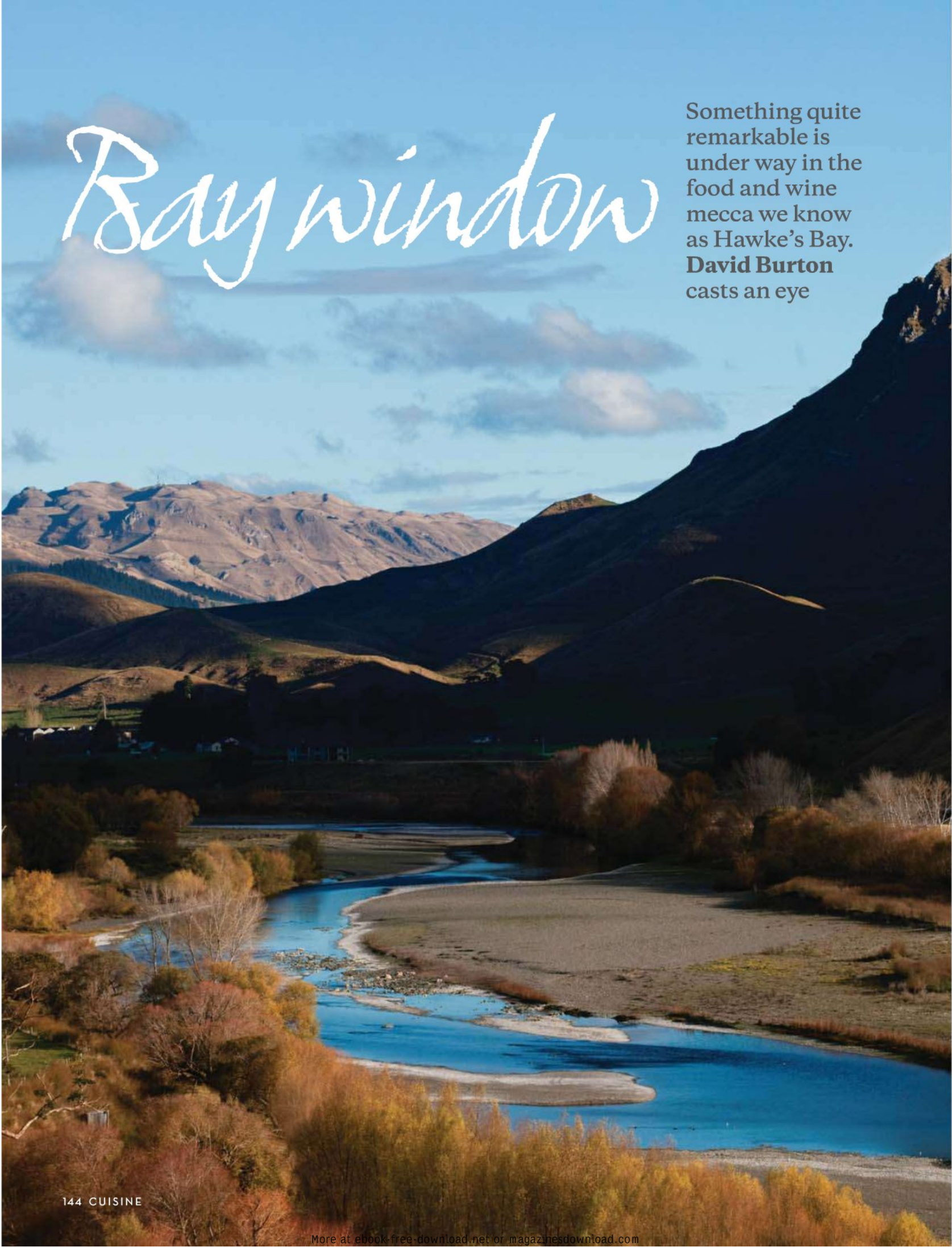
Bay window

Something quite remarkable is under way in the food and wine mecca we know as Hawke's Bay. **David Burton** casts an eye



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Elephant Hill winery restaurant; opposite page: Tukituki River Valley

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT

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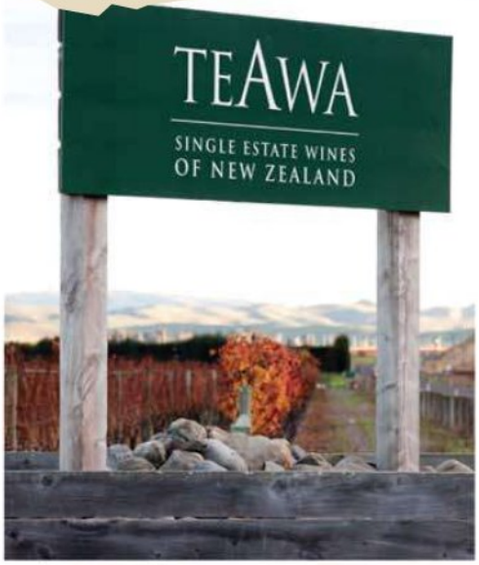

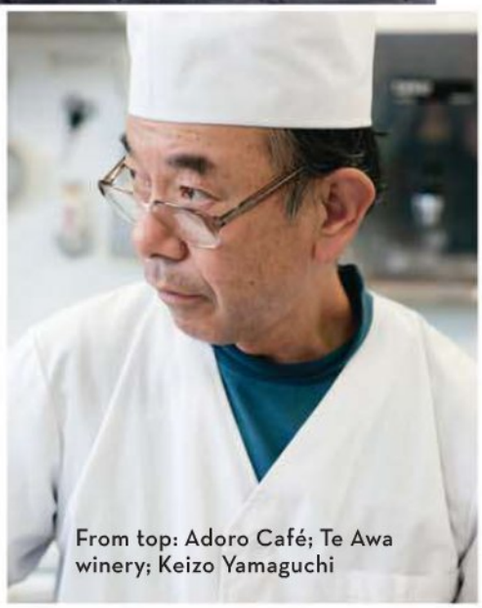

From top: Adoro Café; Te Awa winery; Keizo Yamaguchi

Over the past nine months, Hawke's Bay has been marked by a flurry of launches and openings – of gourmet food stores, cafés and new wine labels – often in the most unlikely locations.

For instance, Taste Cornucopia may be situated at the wrong end of Hastings opposite an adult shop, a pre-loved clothing shop and the Winz office, but the café's clientele fits the city's new demographic to a T, as seen in the crowds of first-home buyers and their toddlers who pack the place out each lunchtime.

And genteel Havelock North has recently shed its starched white tablecloths in favour of settings more hip: since September, the town has seen the arrival of Bellatino's, The Milkbar and Fresh n Wild. Has Havelock ever been described as hip? Check out the funky all-over-startling-pink pizzeria, Pipi's, which most evenings is heaving, and you have to believe it.

Meanwhile, down at Ahuriri, the gentrification of Napier's rough port suburb continues, with posh new villas and apartments popping up alongside the giant storage tanks and the headquarters of the Outlaws Motorcycle Club.

Another Italian restaurant, The Factory, has just opened next to the long-standing Mediterranean food warehouse Vetro, and what with fresh produce, meat and gourmet preserves from the recently opened Picada, and the brand new arrival of the Tangaroa Seafoods retail shop, Ahuriri's apartment dwellers need no longer leave the suburb to do their food shopping.

Ahuriri

Picada

3/87 Bridge St, ph: 06-835 1492

Every tourist likes to take a bit of Hawke's Bay home with them in a jar or a bottle, and Michele Davies and her cousin Kerry Schenk are happy to oblige. Newly opened in trendy Ahuriri, their shop Picada supports all the quality artisan food producers in the Bay – Aromatics sauces, Gernot's preserves and Ti Kouka Farm organic meat – as well as selling fresh produce, conventional and organic.

Making heat-and-eat smoked fish pie and beef lasagna is a change of lifestyle for Michele, who for 20 years ran her own post-production television company in Auckland. She misses the money. "But surely the lifestyle is less stressful?"

"No – I also do Picada's books!"

Sushi Aozora

2A/87 Bridge St, ph: 06-835 1661

Of the six sushi shops now in Hawke's Bay, five are Korean owned and operated. The other is Sushi Aozora ("blue skies"), opened in December 2008 by Satomi Yamaguchi and her husband Keizo, a sushi master of 15 years' experience in Matsusaka, Japan. The couple arrived in Napier from the US post 9/11, not knowing a soul, but have now won over locals by pricing their sushi from 90 cents a piece and holding evening classes. It's never going to make them rich, but Satomi says that they just want ordinary Kiwis to share their culture.

Switch Coffee

Ph: 027-294 9015

Until a year ago, coffee roasting was merely a hobby for former pastor Trevor Williams. Now based in Ahuriri with a 30kg Petroncini roaster he bought on a visit to Bologna, he's rebranded as Switch Coffee (not to be confused with Switch Espresso in Christchurch) and supplies exclusively to Hawke's Bay cafés, supermarkets and food stores. He describes his style as smooth, full-bodied and very easy to drink as a flat white.

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Clockwise: Bellatino's; local persimmons; Te Mata Figs; Sushi Aozora

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Tangaroa Seafoods

Retail shop, 7 Tangaroa St, ph: 06-835 0461

As you browse at the super-long counter at the recently opened Tangaroa Seafoods retail shop, the array of glistening fish confirms what your nose has already told you – that the fish at this particular shop really is fresh. Now, there's a change. The reason: Tangaroa Seafoods is a relatively small company, owning only four fishing vessels, and in stark contrast to the big companies, it has decided to concentrate on the domestic market rather than export.

Hastings

Aurum Coffee Roasters

1101 Heretaunga St East, Hastings, ph: 06-873 5039, aurumcoffee.co.nz

Aurum is Latin for gold, which explains the imagery running through the titles of Bruce and Wendy McKenzie's blends – 18Ct, 24Ct (Fairtrade organic), Rose Gold, Au and Fools Gold. Within a year of opening Aurum, they had won both bronze and a silver at the 2007 New Zealand Coffee Festival. Their coffee is sold here at the roastery as well as at the local farmers' market and at a Havelock North kiosk.

Taste Cornucopia

219 Heretaunga St East, Hastings, ph: 06-878 8730

Taste is the first restaurant venture for English-born chef-patron James Beck, who grew up in Auckland but returned to work in Europe for eight years. He began at the Savoy Hotel in London, which, as he points out, was a good place to begin. After that came two Antwerp restaurants, each with a Michelin star, and a two-star restaurant in Holland's flashest hotel, the Amstel in Amsterdam, where, after a year, he was given the job of making the cakes that sold for $25 a slice.

A two-week internship at The Fat Duck in Bray followed and, although James concedes the food he now cooks is far removed from that, his experience shows through. See restaurant review on page 164.

Havelock North

Bellatino's Food Lovers Market

9 Napier Rd, ph: 06-875 8103

With whole provolone cheeses hanging from the ceiling and the smell of cured meats in the air, Bellatino's evokes the atmosphere of the old Italian "pork stores" that owner Bart Narracci grew up with in New York. However, since it occupies over half the floor area of what was a huge furniture store, Bellatino's is no boutique.

Indeed, with a big fresh produce section in addition to the aisles of dried pastas, grains, oils, preserves, fresh meat and ready-made meals, the newly opened store carries enough stock to provide Havelock North shoppers with a viable alternative to the supermarket.

Fresh n Wild

7 Donnelly St, ph: 06-877 1081

As Hawke's Bay's only dedicated organic store, Fresh n Wild takes niche marketing to new heights: everything, but everything, on the shelves of this shop is certified organic, from the grains and fresh produce to the salads and the gluten-free bread made with rice flour and tapioca by the in-house chef.

Owner Daniel Lem is a physiologist, his wife a nutritionist, and Fresh n Wild is the outcome of their desire to go into business together.

While wanting to capitalise on the resurgence of young families into Havelock, the couple also appreciate that Havelock has more traditionally been a retirement village and offer home deliveries for the house-bound.

Te Mata Figs

Cherrybrook, 205 Napier Rd, ph: 0274-764 777

This year marks the first season for Te Mata Figs, whose 150 trees have been two years in the ground. Murray Douglas and Helen Walker grow summer fruits, but saw figs as a way of stretching their selling season into autumn. They have planted 13 different cultivars, the different ripening times ensuring longer availability.

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James Beck, owner-chef at Taste Cornucopia; opposite page from top: Bellatino's and owner Bart Narracci; Fresh n Wild

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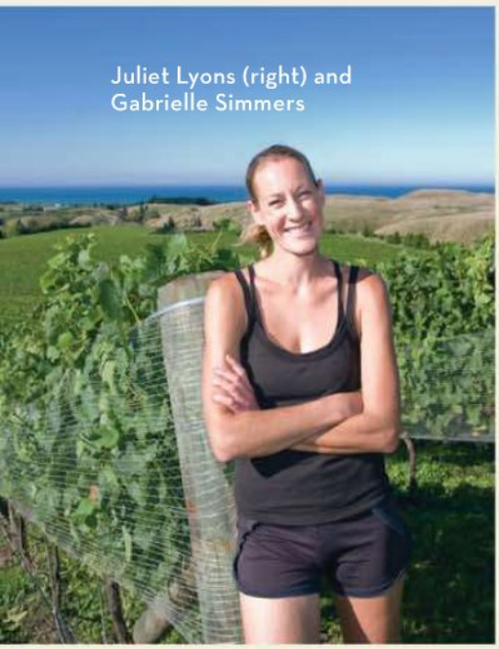

Juliet Lyons (right) and Gabrielle Simmers

Wines for a new world

Hawke's Bay is throwing up a new generation of wine stars. Look for these exciting boutique labels.

&Co

andco.co.nz

Winemaker Gabrielle Simmers' first release of her 2009 Sauvignon Blanc stands out not only for its packaging (crown cap, in a Champagne bottle) but for its flavour – long and luscious with passionfruit notes underpinned by a French-like minerality from the limestone-rich soils in her Te Awanga Millar Road vineyard.

Dada

dadawine.co.nz

The label of Kiwi winemaker Kate Galloway and her French winemaker partner David Ramonteu (known for their Alluviale range), Dada broaches new territory. No clues are given as to the grapes in this blended dry white. The idea is to let the wine speak for itself. Which it does, eloquently.

Dark Horse Vineyard

darkhorsevineyard.co.nz

The Lyons family has owned land in the Gimblett Gravels for 26 years, but Dark Horse Vineyard came into being via the younger generation. All work in the vineyard is done by hand by winemaker Juliet Lyons and her husband, Phillip Gray, and the resulting Syrah is rich and intense. Other wines are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Viognier.

Easthope Winegrowers

easthope.co.nz

Rod Easthope, chief winemaker at Craggy Range, and his winemaker wife, Emma, now have their own label, most famously including the Gatecrasher, a Sauvignon Blanc produced from Dartmoor Valley grapes with all the flourishes usually reserved for expensive reds – handpicked, fermented with indigenous yeast and matured in used French barriques.

No.8 Wines

Longtime Vidal chief winemaker, now winemaking consultant, Syrah devotee Rod McDonald also has his own label, No.8 Wines, named for the ubiquitous symbol of Kiwi ingenuity. To him No.8 is the "notion of nutting your way through all the decisions that need to be made in the life of wine, balanced by experience but always with the vision of the final wine in mind". In this case, No.8 Syrah, richly reflecting its Hawke's Bay heritage.

Rua Whenua Wines

ruawhenua.co.nz

The vineyard of Swiss-born Rene Fisch is the source of two Merlot-Cabernet blends, a reserve Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc, mainly made by hand using traditional methods, and bottled with corks rather than screwcaps.

In season, they offer up to five varieties at a time for sale at the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Market, ranging from the honey-coloured flesh of French Sugar to the deep crimson of Oakura and the even deeper Adriatic.

The Milkbar

8 Joll Rd, ph: 06-877 7779

We've all heard of the gourmet deli, but how about the gourmet dairy?

When Giorgos and Megan Damiris took over 8 Joll Rd last September, it had been the local dairy for 47 years. So, retaining the "Dairy" sign, they set about reinventing the institution for the new millennium, leaving the centre aisle of commodity goods and sweets for the kids to buy after school, but adding Harald's artisan loaves to the bags of sliced white, and stocking superior home-marinated Kalamata olives and cheeses.

There are ready-made, take-home soups and Greek meals (Giorgos' family heritage) on offer, too, but, as the name suggests, The Milkbar is best known for its milkshakes, made the old-fashioned way with ice-cream, which customers can sip outside, seated around a stainless-steel bench taken from an old meatworks.

Napier

Abalone Exporters

804 SH2, Awatoto, ph: 06-835 8655

Last December, Abalone Exporters manager Richard Hendry began selling direct to the public from the factory door for the first time since opening in 2002. The results amazed him. In summer he sells more at the door than he supplies to restaurateurs. Even over winter it's a third of his business.

His paua are harvested when they reach 50mm to 75mm in length and, due to this small size and their diet of fish meal, seaweed meal and fish oils, the flesh is paler in colour, milder in flavour and much more tender than wild paua, which can only be harvested when mature. They don't even need beating to tenderise them. "It's the difference between lamb and mutton," Richard says.

GABRIELLE SIMMERS BY ANNALIESE HOUGH; JULIET LYONS BY RICHARD BRIMER; HAUMOANA HOUSE BY BRIAN CULY

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Clockwise: Pork belly at Elephant Hill; Cape Kidnappers; Tukituki Valley; Haumoana House

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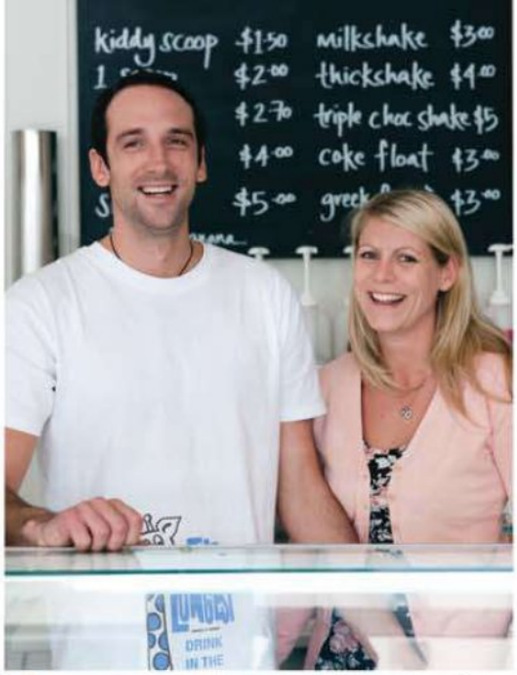

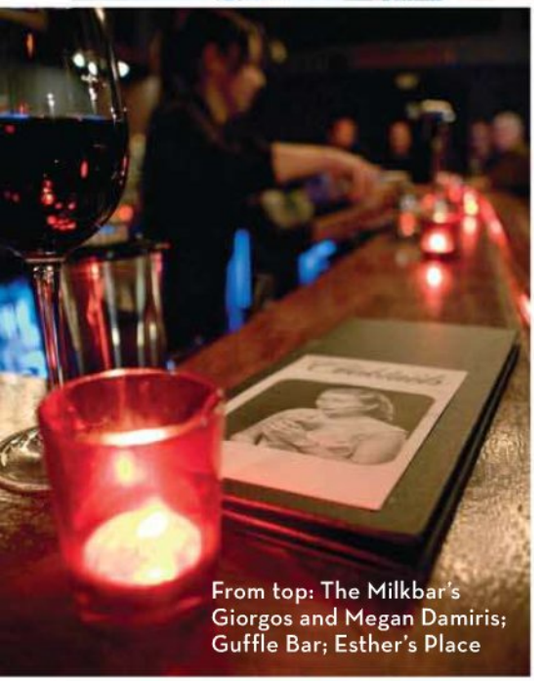

From top: The Milkbar's Giorgos and Megan Damiris; Guffle Bar; Esther's Place

Adoro Café

142 Hastings St, ph: 06-835 1747

Newly arrived to shake incumbents from their complacency, Paul Greaves has owned cafés for 15 years in Auckland, Queensland and Italy. He uses his own tailormade coffee blend to make excellent cappuccino at his hole-in-the-wall, Melbourne-style espresso bar and also offers a vast counter spread of croissants and Danish pastries, imported frozen from France and baked fresh daily.

Gernot's Gold

102 Shakespeare Rd, ph: 06-835 1552, gernotsgold.co.nz

Farmers' markets are somewhat overcrowded with artisan-made preserves these days, but Gernot's delicate jams and jellies are a notch above the rest. Made with unusual fruits such as yuzu, loquat and Rangpur lime, the jellies have huge intensity of flavour, thanks to their being made without thickening agents, which have a dulling effect.

Guffle Bar

29A Hastings St, ph: 06-835 8847

At Napier's stylish late-night cocktail bar, it is the house margarita that is on tap. It's served in recycled jam jars, which may seem at odds with the sophistication of the place, but there's a reason: they began doing so one art deco festival weekend, to fit in with the theme of prohibition and bath-tub booze, and the habit has stuck.

Ti Kouka Farm Organic Meat

301 St Aubyn St West, Hastings, ph: 06-870 3598, theorganicfarm.co.nz

When Andy Tait-Jamieson and Sophie Siers moved on to their sheep and cattle farm in 2002, they turned to organic and bio-dynamic methods. The South Devon cattle and Wiltshire sheep are not drenched or fed serums, while their pastures are not sprayed with pesticides or fertilisers. Since the grass takes longer to grow, so do the cattle and sheep.

This, they believe, helps explain why Ti Kouka beef and lamb are tastier, and noticeably denser in texture without being tougher. The meat is also hung and aged.

Find Ti Kouka meat at the local Sunday farmers' market, as well as in good food stores nationwide.

Te Awanga

Elephant Hill Estate & Winery Restaurant

86 Clifton Rd, Te Awanga, ph: 06-872 6060, elephanthill.co.nz

Always good, Elephant Hill's European-inspired cuisine has recently taken an upward turn with the appointment of Ashley Jones as executive chef. Dine in sleek modern surroundings, inside or out on the deck, with glimpses of the sea shore between the vines.

To stay

Elephant Hill Lodge

219 Parkhill Rd, Te Awanga, ph: 06-873 0400, elephanthilllodge.co.nz

High behind Elephant Hill winery sits a luxurious U-shaped cluster of three self-contained suites to sleep six guests, overlooking the vines, the ocean and Cape Kidnappers beyond. Minimalist design accentuates both the dramatic artworks and the view.

Esther's Place

7 Humber St, Pandora, ph: 06-875 1977, esthersplace.co.nz

This member of the Millar Road family is a luxurious modern apartment in a new building, with a terrace overlooking Ahuriri lagoon. The prints and paintings are from well-known local artists, such as Dick Frizzell, Fane Flaws and Para Matchitt.

Haumoana House at Millar Road

83 Millar Rd, RD2, Hastings, ph: 06-875 1977

The newest – and largest – addition to the cluster of cottages at Millar Road, Haumoana House is a spacious, open-plan modern home with wide views, and an outdoor pool. All the furniture, artworks and ceramics are Hawke's Bay designed and made, including duvets from owners Greg Collinge and Gabrielle Simmers' design store, Esther Diamond. Sleeps eight.

GUFFLE BAR BY ANNALIESE HOUGH

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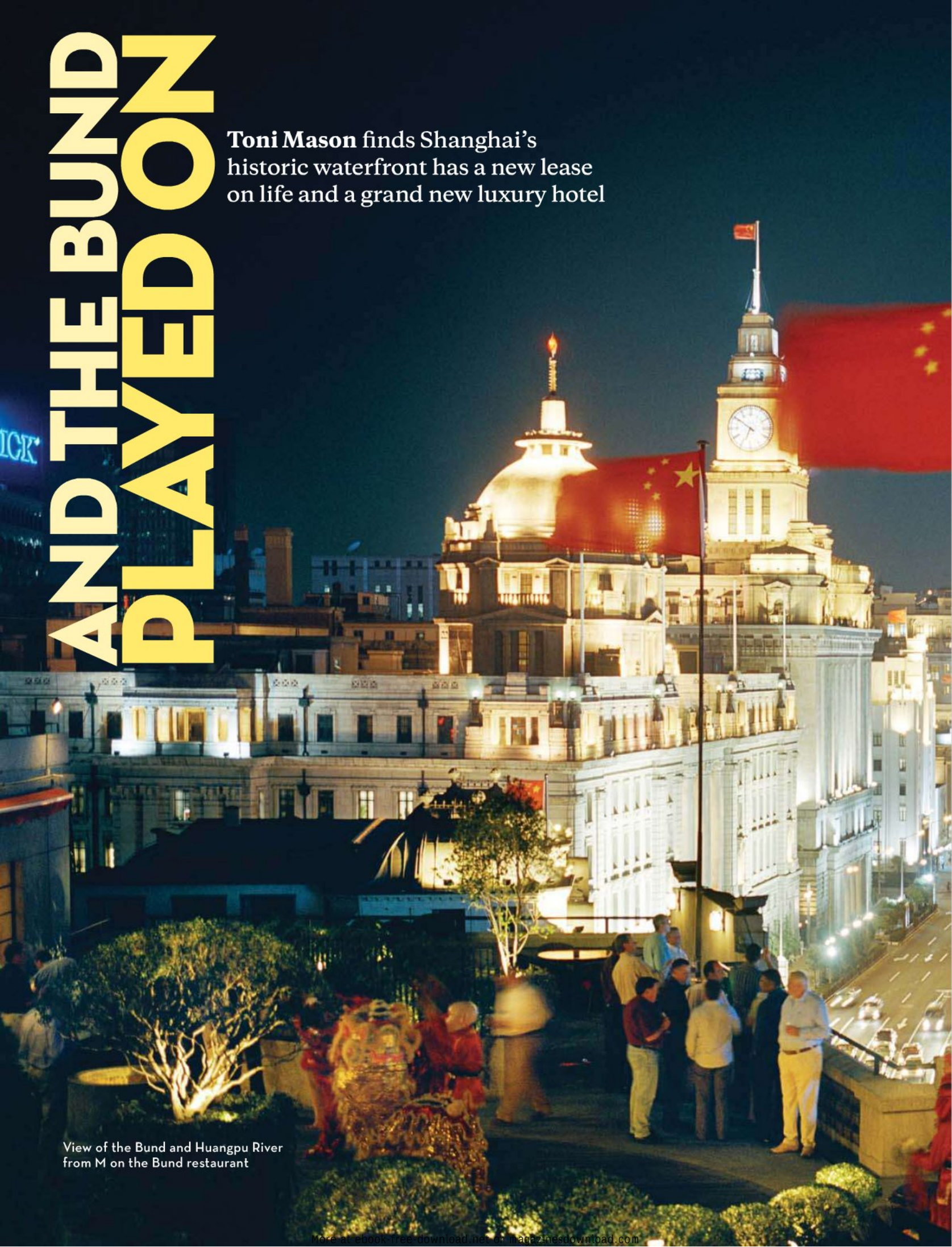
AND THE BUND PLAYED ON

Toni Mason finds Shanghai's historic waterfront has a new lease on life and a grand new luxury hotel



View of the Bund and Huangpu River from M on the Bund restaurant

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PHOTOGRAPH ANDREW ROWAT

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East meets west, old meets new... it's hard not to reach for clichés when it comes to Shanghai. After all, it was once known as the Paris of the East. But stark contrasts abound – in the shiny skyscrapers rubbing shoulders with traditional buildings, in the speedy late-model cars dodging cargo-laden bicycles nonchalantly trundling into heaving thoroughfares, an image mirroring the juggernaut of progress advancing on the city. The pace and energy of change here are palpable.

The contrasts come no more apparent than on the banks of the Huangpu River, a branch of the Yangtze that divides the city into east and west. On the west bank is the Bund, a two-kilometre stretch lined with European-style art deco and neoclassical buildings, legacy of the Western influence that dominated the area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. On the east bank stands the futuristic conglomeration of skyscrapers like the space-age Oriental Pearl Tower in Pudong, the new commercial district of Shanghai where only 20 years ago there was little but boggy swamp.

By the 1920s, the Bund (from band, the Hindi word for embankment) was the financial hub of Asia, home to major finance and trading houses – Bund does rhyme with fund – along with classic landmarks such as the art deco Peace Hotel, formerly the Cathay, one of the most famous hotels in the 1930s and where Noel Coward wrote *Private Lives*. Shanghai was one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world.

In preparation for Expo 2010, opened on 1 May and running to 31 October, the Bund has undergone major restoration, with some traffic rerouted and the lanes – unwisely increased in the 1990s – reduced to widen the promenade by the river.

Now more people-friendly, it will hopefully regain the vigour of its heyday in the 1930s when it was the playground of society. Graceful buildings are being renovated, like the aforementioned Peace Hotel, which will reopen later this year as the Fairmont Peace Hotel.

And the Bund got its first new building in more than 60 years when the Peninsula Shanghai opened in October 2009, the latest of the famed Peninsula hotels that started in Hong Kong in 1928. Like a reflection of the history of the Bund, it marks the return of the parent company, the Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, to Shanghai where it had grand hotels up until the late 1940s.

The 14-storey Peninsula, at the northern end of the Bund next to the park-like former site of the British Consulate, is a triumph, successfully recreating the art deco ambience of the area's former glory times.

The Peninsula's signature customised Rolls-Royce Phantoms sweep up to the granite and bronze entrance manned by white-clad doormen who greet you as though they genuinely mean it. Inside, the columns in the lobby stretch from the black marble floor to the lofty backlit, glass-panelled ceiling, flanked by two huge celadon green murals, designed by Hong Kong artist Helen Poon, whose three-dimensional effects come into play as you move about the room.

Traditional afternoon teas are served here – think thin cucumber sandwiches, scones, jam and cream, and dainty cakes – accompanied by a string quartet on the mezzanine floor. On the first Saturday of each month, the hotel holds afternoon tea dances, with a big band playing the classics – a tradition started at the Astor, one of the company's former hotels here, in the 1920s.

The sense of visiting a more glamorous era extends to the rooms where a black lacquered screen, raised with the touch of a switch, hides the wide-screen TV, while the TV set in the wall of the marble bathroom, operated by a touchpad beside the bath, is so discreet you almost miss it. The large dressing room might be one a gentleman of the era would have had, but the valet comes in the form of an electronic dummy waiter in which you put your laundry, push a button and it reappears in hours. However, the gentleman would probably not have had much need of the nail polish dryer.

The hotel is crowned on the 13th floor by fine-dining restaurant, Sir Elly's. Here the art deco theme is blended with Chinese touches in red and black lacquer, punctuated with large retro ceramic vases. The food, by French chef Arnaud Berthelier, who has worked with Alain Ducasse among other notables, is, in his words, "global Mediterranean with French technique". It stands up well to the attention-grabbing views over the Bund and Pudong.

At the Cantonese restaurant, Yi Long Court, the kitchen is presided over by chef Chi Keung Tang, fresh from working at Chinese restaurant Hei Fung Terrace at the Peninsula Tokyo, where he won a Michelin star two years running. Here he delivers Hong Kong-style Cantonese food, "home-style and warm" in a setting like a grand yum cha restaurant with art deco flourishes.

A quiet drink can be had in the Compass Bar on ground level, accompanied in the evenings by soft piano music. Or, for a change of pace, the glamour lives on in the basement at the Salon de Ning, inspired by the notion of a socialite of the 1920s.

Based on the style of a shikumen (the traditional Shanghainese stone-wall-fronted terrace house), it's like an eccentric drawing room crammed with objets d'art – with semi-private themed alcoves to lounge in. A fitting tribute that transports you to a heady exotic era.

ORIENTAL PEARL TOWER, GREG GIRARD; COURTESY STUDIO ROUGE; ISSIMO; FIGARO PHOTO/SNAPPER MEDIA; PEOPLE 7, ANDREW ROWAT; DIN TAI FUNG, RYAN PYLE; SOUP DUMPLINGS, HERB CHUNG, HERB STUDIO

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Top row from left: The Peninsula Shanghai's lobby; Oriental Pearl Tower, Pudong
This row: Prosciutto and mozzarella at Issimo in the Jia Hotel; bar at Issimo; ceramics from Spin
Bottom row: Bar at People 7; DinTaiFung and the famous xiao long bao (soup dumplings)

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M on the Bund restaurant; Island 6 (left)

MORE ON THE BUND AND BEYOND

It's easy and cheap to get around Shanghai by taxi, but you must get your hotel concierge or someone to write the address you're heading for in Chinese, as the drivers don't speak English.

Jean Georges

In Three on the Bund, this is high-end dining, with the elegant dark-panelled, art deco-style interior by architect Michael Graves. The first dining room is now Nougatine, a less formal bistro style like its older sibling in New York. The fine dining next door has a view to match over the river to Pudong. The bar here is worth the visit alone.
threeonthebund.com

M on the Bund

Australian chef Michelle Garnaut pioneered the international restaurant scene on the Bund when she opened this restaurant in 1999. The food is wide-ranging contemporary European with a Mediterranean bent stretching to Turkey. And there's a touch of down under in "M's famous pavlova". **m-onthebund.com**

Glamour Bar

On the floor below, this stablemate of M on the Bund is frequented by upwardly mobile locals, glitterati and expats It is never more glam than when hosting the Shanghai International Literary Festival each March. **m-theglamourbar.com**

Lost Heaven Yunnan Folk Cuisine

Just off the Bund (the original is in the French Concession), Lost Heaven specialises in the folk cuisine of Yunnan province. Lying on the southern border of China, it has a Thai kick along with influences from Burma and tribes from the Yunnan region. A refreshing chance to try an ethnic cuisine not easily found.
lostheaven.com.cn

Martini Bar

On the ground floor of the Dolce and Gabbana Building at 6 on the Bund, this tiny black gem with a huge orange Murano-glass chandelier draws a sophisticated glamorous set. A martini is a must, naturally.
6 The Bund, ph: 021-6339 1200

Sun with Aqua

On the floor above, this bar has a spectacular fish tank across one side of the room. Booths robed in black gauzy curtains by the windows overlook the river and *Bladerunner*-like neon displays on the Pudong skycrapers at night. A Zen-like inner walkway leads to the Japanese restaurant where chefs at the open kitchen prepare high-end cuisine.
6 The Bund, 021-6339 2779

Bar Rouge

An outrageous number of chandeliers hang over the central bar in one of the chicest spots in the city, and with one of the best views in an area of remarkable views. It's showy on both sides of the bar, with the bartenders regularly setting drinks on fire and the well-heeled clientele a mix of locals and foreigners, and of all ages.
18 The Bund, bar-rouge-shanghai.com

Issimo

Part of the stylish Jia Hotel in a beautifully detailed 1920s building just off the Nanjing Rd, Issimo has a moody modernist bar area. Snacks are served here and modern Italian cuisine through in the restaurant.
931 West Nanjing Rd, ph: 021-3302 4997, jiashanghai.com

Lynn Modern Shanghai Cuisine

Here you'll find a modern and light take on Shanghainese cuisine. Every Sunday is yum cha for a set price of around 80 yuan (about NZ$18).
99-1 Xikang Rd, (near Nanjing Xi Rd), ph: 021-6247 0101

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L'Atelier in Salon de Ning, The Peninsula Shanghai

DinTaiFung

This famed dumpling chain started in Taiwan. The Hong Kong branch was awarded a Michelin Star in the 2010 edition. This branch, on the second floor of a mall in Xintiandi – meaning "new heaven", a fashionable precinct set in restored shikumen houses – is frequented by locals and foreigners. In a glass-fronted kitchen, a legion of cooks wearing masks and white caps fastidiously prepare delicious dumplings. **dintaifung.com.tw**

Jesse Restaurant

This modest Shanghainese restaurant became famous after late film star Leslie Cheung had a party here, so you need to book. The two storeys are crammed with everyone from celebrities to local families.
41 Tianping Rd, French Concession, ph: 021-6282 9260

People 7

This bar is easy to miss with its bald concrete entranceway. At the top of some steps is a backlit "keypad" consisting of nine holes in the wall. When you make your reservation, you are given a code to enter by sticking your hand in the "keys". A large metal door then rolls open, leading to a stark interior. Popular with locals.
805 Julu Rd, Jing'an, ph: 021-5404 0707

SHANGHAI SHOPPING

Spin

Restaurateur Jeremy Kuo wasn't happy with the tableware available so decided to have his own made. This two-floor showroom is a marvel to visit, with beautifully displayed bowls, teapots and tea sets, vases, platters, lamps – all finely cast and an elegant contemporary refinement of traditional ceramics. Everything is very reasonably priced and will be expertly packed in stylish boxes for your trip home.
758 Julu Rd, ph: 021-6279 2545

Annabel Lee

Following the tradition of Chinese silk embroidery, with hand-stitched scarves, cushion covers and more in a modern, whimsical style. Be sure to visit the quirky loo. In a small lane on the Bund. **annabel-lee.com**

Shiatzy Chen

Next door is the flagship Shanghai store of this Taiwanese fashion house. It's worth taking a look at the luxury clothing and accessories for women and men – of modern design with a Chinese aesthetic – but all comes with a luxury price tag. **shiatzychen.com**

Chinese Hand-Printed Blue Nankeen Exhibition Hall

This traditional hand-woven cotton is hand-printed and sold here. It bears similar patterns to the blue-glazed porcelain of the Song Dynasty.
24 Lane 637, Chang Le Rd, French Concession

Han Feng

A designer who worked in New York as an opera costume designer for the likes of the Met. Her high-end handmade clothes and scarves are displayed in her apartment. Phone for an appointment. **hanfeng.com**

Taikang Rd

Hailed as the new Xintiandi, this is a fascinating area with a web of lanes full of shops and boutiques. Good place for out-of-the ordinary gifts.

50 Moganshan Rd art district

In a rambling former textile factory overlooking Suzhou Creek, a host of galleries forms the artistic hub of Shanghai. Many artists also live and work here.

Peninsula Shanghai, peninsula.com

Toni Mason flew to Shanghai with Cathay Pacific, which has 10 flights a week from Auckland to Hong Kong, with 16 flights a day from Hong Kong to Shanghai on sister airline, Dragonair. cathaypacific.co.nz

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TAMAKI PAENGA HIRA
AUCKLAND MUSEUM

aucklandmuseum.com

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restaurants

Edited by Toni Mason

PHOTOGRAPH KEN DOWNIE

PARADISH

More at ebook-free-download.net or magazinesdownload.com

Auckland

SAISON
★★★★
417 Manukau Rd, Epsom,
ph: 09-631 5650, saison.co.nz
Lunch Wed-Fri 12pm-3pm,
dinner Tues-Sat
$$$$

Saison owner-chef Scott Denning

The "S" on the signage here has been well used. In the 1990s it headed up Spalato. Then it did duty for the next incumbent, Sopranos. Now it's doing a capital job for Saison.

Saison was opened in January by chef Scott Denning, who has been working overseas for some years including at Le Gavroche under Michel Roux, and maître d' Jean-Jacques Bourvis, who has been a restaurateur and maître d' in Auckland for many years, most recently at Tribeca.

However, there's a less useful relic of the 90s. Apart from some refurbished seating along one wall, the décor is the same – and strange it is, too. It might have been passable once, but now says more airport lounge than smart restaurant, with bulky, odd-shaped dividers in a nondescript veneer.

No other complaints, though. Jean-Jacques is a genial and professional host, totally au fait with the menu and wines, and his food and wine matching is spot on. Naturally, he also matches the French-leaning food, which kicks off with a welcome gift from the kitchen. A Jerusalem artichoke potage served in elegant coffee cups was creamy but not cloying, beautifully seasoned and with earthy depth of flavour.

The house-smoked salmon was finely done and came with, again, beautifully seasoned whipped avocado, julienned apple, and endive caramelised to a deep, concentrated sweetness.

The duo of ham hock terrine and duck liver parfait, a Gallic classic, was a star. The chunky terrine sat on a sweetly spirited gelée of Pineau des Charentes, a fortified wine made with cognac eau de vie. The parfait was well flavoured and velvety – and the house-baked brioche so light, it just held together.

Roasted venison was tender with a hint of game ("slightly feral", according to my friend, who meant it in a good way). The jus of Côtes du Rhône was nicely balanced with bitter chocolate, and cherries provided sweet notes.

Duck breast was just pink, the fat rendered and skin crisp. It came with a "cannelloni" (actually unrolled) of shredded confit duck leg and a savoury consommé spiked with fresh tarragon, which was poured at the table.

Of the desserts, pear tarte Tatin was perfectly caramelised and had well-cooked short sweet pastry where so many are found wanting.

The by-the-glass wine selection isn't huge, but there are some surprise half bottles: Te Mata Elston Chardonnay 2008, Te Mata Awatea 2007 and Ata Rangi Crimson 2008, all for $32. Wine ordered by the glass is poured at the table – an all-too-rare occurrence.

The dodgy décor is no match for the food, which is sophisticated yet uncomplicated, and never overworked. A case of substance over style, then.

TONI MASON

SAISON AND PARADISH, KEN DOWNIE

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PARADISH
★★★
582 Karangahape Rd, Newton,
ph: 09-361 6789
Dinner 7 days from 5.30pm
$$

Above, from left: Paradish chefs Wei Qing Liu, Fu Bin Liu with the smoked duck, Szechuan style and Ying Jian Yan

While students of décor debate the style integrity of the white, wooden trees with stuffed parrots, the aesthetic success of the hospital-white wall panels and the cultural importance of the coloured glass in the hollow-fish table decorations, the rest of us can contemplate the opening of an inner-city restaurant with, finally, a clear and welcome point of difference.

The bright-white environment of Paradish, with its red and black, slightly sinister, warrior motif, is fascinating and adds something quirky and fun. It is unlike any other Asian restaurant I have ever visited. More disconcerting are the waiters with their protection-squad lapel microphones and high-tech headsets sending and receiving instructions to and from the kitchen and, one presumes, each other, as they worked the room.

Of course, there is no reason why technology can't be put to good use in a busy restaurant; the problem is that Paradish, even after several months, still seems a little disorganised, with staff sometimes running between tables and the main dining room and two private dining rooms. Things don't flow as they should and, although on the nights I visited I was well looked after, there was some tension in the service.

There were other minor flaws: a large menu you had to turn on its side to read, except that the pictures were then at right angles to the titles; the menu's spelling errors and quirky grammar; and, of greater annoyance, the fact our very small table for two was simply unable to accommodate the number of dishes we ordered.

These are lapses that are simple enough to remedy and no doubt things will settle. When it came to the food we had no issues. It was all wonderful.

Paradish offers primarily Szechuan cuisine which, with its liberal use of garlic and chilli, is becoming more popular in the West. It delivers bold flavours and is renowned for the use of the Szechuan peppercorn: a fragrant, mouth-puckering variety that has a gentle citrus flavour. Szechuan food is prepared using a raft of techniques including pickling, salting and drying, as well as the more common deep-frying, braising and steaming. All the qualities that distinguish Szechuan food are incorporated in the Paradish menu.

We took the opportunity to explore dishes that offered up unfamiliar tastes and textures, beginning with a series of cold dishes that came on small plates.

The bitter melon was outstanding but, beware – it is exactly as described. Other notable choices include hand-shredded fish, kidneys in hot and spicy sauce and the "skins of bean juice" with pickles that came in a superbly light soy sauce. We also tried a sensational dish of round beans in ginger sauce: they were robust, tasty and moreish.

Next came a huge serving of tender, sizzling cuttlefish, very spicy king prawns and even spicier sliced squid with chilli and capsicum – all excellent. To further test the waters, we added smoked duck in Szechuan sauce and pork ribs with chilli and pickled beans. The ribs were succulent and tasty, but the star on the plate was definitely the beans with their salt and vinegar piquancy. The duck was the weakest link – not much evidence of smoke and the texture of cooked liver, but no substantial complaints there either.

Prices are very reasonable, especially given the generous portions. The wine list is perfectly adequate, but we chose to stick with the Chinese beer and it proved a good choice for thwarting the chilli heat.

We liked the bright and edgy Paradish – plenty – and will happily return to continue our journey of discovery into Szechuan cuisine.

KERRY TYACK

More at ebook-free-download.net or magazinesdownload.com

Owner-chef James Beck (top right) and his Marinated Pork Belly

Hastings

TASTE CORNUCOPIA
★★★★
219 Heretaunga St East,
ph: 06-878 8730
Mon-Fri 7.30am-4pm,
Sat 8.30am-2pm
$$

Walking past this café, you might not give it a second glance. It seems just another daytime café like a thousand others across suburbia, with its budget tables, spindly tubular steel chairs and tiled floor. A mural of cabbage trees and tweety birds lends the ambience of a cute playcentre.

Appropriately, there's a high chair in the corner and, on a typical day, an entire kindy's worth of young parents with their infants, reflecting Hasting's new demographic.

Having transplanted himself from the Michelin-starred restaurants in Europe (see page 148) to open his first venture at the wrong end of main street, James Beck seriously under-promises and massively overdelivers.

He has no licence as yet and not even written menus – just a blackboard behind the bar on which he inscribes terse descriptions, like "slow-braised pork belly" and "ethical catch of the day". Yet with mains priced between $15 and $20, he's busy.

"Soup of the day with fresh bread" may be beetroot, shaded an outrageous puce with judiciously added cream, tasting even better when you add a little of the garnish – salted capers, parsley and small cubes of the Hohepa feta that James once spent six months making. The seafood tartare was topped with sprouted grains and the most amazing miniature Mount Fuji of lime coriander granita, the icy powder made not in a fancy Pacojet but with a simple Microplane.

My bluenose, supplied spanking fresh by Tangaroa Seafoods (see page 148), came with bulgur wheat and a harmonious medley of orange, pumpkin and butternut mash.

With an eye to dramatic presentation, James has a template with which he imprints the word "taste" on the rim of each plate, using an ingredient that suits the dish, be it carrot or pumpkin purée or yoghurt. He also inserted zany "aerials" of carrot leather into the quinoa and kumara accompanying the marinated pork belly, which, despite having been braised for six hours, was still moist and delicious. "Moist" also describes the bittersweet vegan orange cake enriched with almonds, while those craving a little dairy should try the not entirely classical tarte Tatin, topped with white chocolate and yoghurt mousse.

James uses organic ingredients where possible and views Taste as an experiment to see if the concept works. If it does, his next step will be to open a restaurant on an organic farm, using estate-raised produce and recycling his kitchen scraps as compost.

DAVID BURTON

TASTE CORNUCOPIA AND TIROHANA CELLARS, KIERAN SCOTT

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Tirohana Cellars; top left: Bob the dog; left: Pumpkin Bread & Butter Pudding with Caramel Sauce & Vanilla Bean Ice-Cream

Martinborough

TIROHANA CELLARS
★★★
Tirohana Estate, Puruatanga Rd, ph: 06-306 9933, tirohanaestate.com
Lunch and dinner 7 days
$$$$

When Raymond Thompson, founder of television production company Cloud 9, bought the former Voss Estate, rather than demolish the old winery and begin anew, he chose to renovate, transforming what is now the dining room and leaving other areas in intact.

Raymond is a director, so perhaps unsurprisingly his winery restaurant has been dressed like a lavish stage set, ready for customers to participate in the romance of the vines. Walking in through tall doors taken from an old Mexican church, you are struck by several dramatic props – the biggest Chinese parasol you ever saw, a late-18th-century French farmhouse table and a wonderfully camp, ornate mirror.

The table settings are equally as plush and, as I shook out my linen napkin, a crackling sound came from the gravel drive outside – up between the vines cruised a gleaming Bentley, as if on cue.

You never know who your next guests are going to be, says Raymond. He took pity on a scruffy-looking party of bogans recently. Thinking they must be grape-pickers, he instructed his staff not to charge them for the wine tasting, since they looked so down at heel. It later transpired they were members of AC/DC and their entourage, taking time out from their world tour.

Two very different vintages – and expressions – of Tirohana Estate Pinot Noir stood on the table (the wines are still made by Gary Voss with grapes from the old family block). With a single golden Pinot Noir leaf from the autumnal vines laid out on the white tablecloth, the idyll was pretty much complete.

Raymond's daughter Saranne James is chef and her husband Toby looks after the front of house with a mixture of informal chat and fastidious care: between courses, he swept my table free of crumbs with a miniature brush and shovel, then shifted the vine leaf to hide a stain I'd made on the tablecloth.

I'd be lying if I said the price-fixe menu was spectacular, but it was certainly very pleasant, appropriately informal and most reasonably priced.

The subtly spiced salmon fish cakes were significantly lighter in texture than my mother used to make, served over mesclun with a dill aïoli; a salad of goat's cheese with beetroot was nicely balanced with green leaves; and, while the cheese and mushroom open tart was a little overburdened with ingredients for the pastry to be totally crisp, the main course of roasted free-range pork was tender and moist, with lovely crisp crackling, good roast potatoes and plenty of trimmings: a puffy parsnip tart, caramelised apples and shallots, gravy and well-cooked carrots and beans.

If the weather permits, you may wish to dine on the deck outside.

Here you may be graced with the presence of Bob the dog, a golden retriever trained to open doors and fridges for the movies and who, at the height of his fame on the television series *The Tribe*, used to receive 600 fan letters a week.

DAVID BURTON

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Wellington

BOULCOTT STREET BISTRO

★★★

99 Boulcott St, ph: 04-499 4199,
boulcottstreetbistro.co.nz
Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner 7 days
$$$$

Rex Morgan (top left), Boulcott Street Bistro

A Wellington institution with its 20th birthday only months away, Boulcott Street Bistro seems unassailable. If anything, its tiny Victorian Gothic spire has stood all the more defiantly against the nearby highrises on The Terrace since Rex Morgan arrived at the door.

Recently voted outstanding chef by his capital-city peers at the Capital Awards, Rex closed his fine-dining restaurant Citron last year and has confidently taken the Boulcott kitchen in hand, having been brought in as both business partner and head chef.

Nowadays, the big boy is thumping about the ring even more ebulliently, as well he might, given the champ is boxing well below his weight at bistro level where, in his own words, he now has only three or four passes over each plate instead of seven or eight.

As nothing is broken, there's nothing to fix – the food still rolls out of the kitchen in the same comforting Olde Froggie style. Toadies from politics, diplomacy, business and finance croak a chorus of approval, since their favourite dishes, the same they've eaten on the company account every time they've lunched here since 1991, are set in stone.

Two examples of "BSB classics": fillet Béarnaise with fries and red wine jus; and braised lamb shank, potato mash, lentil sauce and minted peas. (Funny how our pubs and cafés have caught up since 1991, isn't it?)

The vintage Champagne posters are still there, maître d' Rusty Donworth has cut his hair and now has a 10 per cent share in the business, and Boulcott's combination of affable, efficient service and dependably good food is still happening. And, if one recent Saturday evening is any indication, Rex is now attracting a sprinkling of slightly younger customers, just as had been hoped.

Those who don't choose crumbed calamari with tartare sauce for the umpteenth time now have a few Rex creations to play with, most notably an unflipped, slightly runny omelette, rich in melted gruyère, as a carrier for prawns and crayfish. The first time I tried this dish I found it amazing for its deceiving zen-like simplicity. I still do, though on my second visit a few months later I found it a little less so, this time the crayfish being not quite so flavourful and fresh.

Oysters in beer batter with sauce tartare looked like a precise facsimile of half-a-dozen golden eggs, the batter as crisp as any tempura and the oysters barely cooked through and perfect.

Next up, slow-roasted pork belly, gingered carrot, fresh tagliatelle and caramelised apple chutney. The gingered carrot, rather wittily, came in broth form and the sharp chutney was a fat-cutting winner; but it needed to be, given the pork belly itself was a little flabby. Maybe I'm just spoiled, but I'm getting used to restaurants that serve pork belly with the fat rendered out to a really thin layer and the skin crisped up just before service, as didn't happen here.

The duck confit is still pretty good here, though, again, there's a lot of it about in the trade these days – the best, most succulent and crisp-skinned I've tasted recently was at the French-owned Marina Restaurant in Gisborne. However, Rex came up trumps with the concept for the garnish – a deliciously earthy mélange of peeled broad beans, mushrooms and bacon.

Yes, the Boulcott is still as good as ever, but nowadays rivals from everywhere are encircling the moat.

DAVID BURTON

BOULCOTT STREET BISTRO, NICOLA EDMONDS; EDESIA, STEPEHEN GOODENOUGH

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From left: Edesia; Akaroa Salmon with Crab Tortellini, Prawn Colcannon & Vanilla Beurre Blanc; chef Ryan Henley

Christchurch

EDESIA
★★★★½
12 Show Place, Addington,
ph: 03-943 2144, edesia.co.nz
Mon-Fri 7.30am-3pm,
dinner Tues-Sat from 5.30pm
$$$$

When Edesia opened in a business park close to Addington Raceway, Christchurch raised its eyebrows. The setting has its charms – water feature, smooth lawns, generous parking. The building, too – what chef wouldn't want to design his own open-chequebook kitchen and what sommelier wouldn't welcome a wall-to-wall wine cache as well as a generous cellar? But – and it is a big but – this is a destination restaurant. And it's a good car trip off the usual inner-city beat.

With the recession hitting so many Canterbury restaurants hard, haute cuisine has been increasingly left to hotel restaurants and a handful of establishments where there is an owner-chef in control.

Edesia breaks that mould. It seems aimed at the city's connoisseurs – the wine list is lengthy and distinguished, the food rich, layered and European.

Every dish is presented with classic artistry and flair – no towers, no drizzles, no dots and no streaks (foams make an occasional appearance). The service is impeccable: knowledgeable, unobtrusive but very attentive. My small struggle with a slightly tough duck breast quickly brought a polite question: "Is everything all right with your meal, madam?"

The reaction to "Actually, no" was swift. The dish was whisked off and replaced in 12 minutes with a portion of meltingly tender duck for which the accompaniments – Puy lentils, tiny roasted beetroots, crisped parsnip slices and a mandarin glaze – formed an inspired medley of earthy, sweet and tart.

A pasta entrée of tortellini stuffed with braised oxtail was rich but small; it teased rather than sated.

Other selections were equally inspired – seared scallops with fennel purée and citrus vinaigrette, and sautéed prawns with dill gnocchi, bacon velouté and apple.

As acknowledgement maybe of the richness of its dishes, Edesia offers a selection of light mains – coq au vin, pilaf, a risotto and a seasonal pasta dish: ours was pappardelle with braised venison, chocolate and hazelnuts.

The regular mains were in line with the current fashion of dishes comprising different cuts of the same animal. Hence, Angus sirloin with braised beef cheeks; and a noisette of lamb with a little roll of sweet shoulder meat.

A similar idea was a great success in the fish dish where crisp-skinned salmon was served with crab tortellini and prawn colcannon. Very good, very clever.

Every dish had layers of flavours, but chef Ryan Henley's care and attention to detail ensured elegance prevailed. There was a slight touch of showmanship, however, in the dessert selection.

A disc of tart boysenberries was crowned with... an egg yolk? Pierce the "yolk", though, and it turned into a cascade of sweet mango purée. A quirky lemon meringue pie with its tiny crumbs and small tastes chasing each other round a largish plate failed to impress, however.

The huge wine list has a good selection of well-priced wines as well as those that dreams are made of (such as a 1970 Krug).

This restaurant and bar is an admirable and bold venture. It deserves to succeed.

KATE FRASER

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Dunedin

PAASHA
★★★
31 St Andrew St, ph: 03-477 7181,
paasha.co.nz
11.30am to late 7 days
$$

Paasha's Turkish Coffee & Turkish Delight

Established about a decade ago, this busy Turkish restaurant in the central city is still a gem. It serves simple, flavoursome, healthy food, expertly cooked, and the service is friendly and efficient. It's no wonder it's almost always packed, but even if you haven't a booking, the staff will do their best to find you a table, if at all possible, in this terracotta-themed environment. If not, there's always the takeaway option.

The menu is tightly focused, although the many combinations make it seem more extensive.

Using halal meat, it serves lamb and chicken primarily in two types of kebab – doner (spit-roasted) and shish (chargrilled, which includes a kofte option).

The Turkish chefs cook the kebabs expertly in full view of diners, cheerfully exchanging quips over the charcoal brazier and doner spits.

Paasha also offers braised lamb shanks and chargrilled lamb cutlets, as well as a range of meze such as hummus, dolma, borek, falafel and zucchini fritters, which means vegetarians as well as carnivores will find something delicious to eat.

All the meat dishes were tender, with the lamb doner particularly flavoursome, the lamb shish juicy, with pink lamb inside, and the kofte kebabs spicy. The accompanying sauces included mild chilli; the refreshing yoghurt, garlic and mint; and the restaurant's signature tomato, onion, capsicum, mushroom and red wine. All the meat dishes are served with coleslaw or tabouleh, lots of rice and pita bread and the portions are generous – the mixed platter for two could easily feed three.

Turkish coffee brewed in an ibrik and refreshing Turkish apple tea are among the beverages offered, and are ideal with baklava, Turkish delight or the other sweets – if you have room after the generous helpings.

Efes, a Turkish pilsner, is listed among the beers and raki among the spirits. The wine list is basic but adequate for the type of restaurant – a selection of varietals from the Villa Maria stable, all available by the glass, but BYO wine is also allowed.

BYO cake is possible, too, which no doubt the many celebrating groups make good use of.

The only downside to dining at Paasha is the noise reverberating from the hard walls, ceiling and floor. But it's the sound of people enjoying themselves, friendly, efficient staff resetting tables and groups of diners coming and going, so it's not a problem for most – just don't go there for a quiet, romantic tête-à-tête.

CHARMIAN SMITH

RATINGS GUIDE

The ratings reflect the reviewers' experience of food, wine, ambience and service, with food given the most weight. We include restaurants that provide a reasonable experience in all or most of these areas and do not feature any restaurant that would score no stars as we regard these as less than satisfactory.

Why waste our readers' good time?

★okay ★★good ★★★very good
★★★★excellent ★★★★★outstanding
$ = up to $15; $$ = $16-$24;
$$$ = $25-$32; $$$$ = $32+ for a typical main course including vegetables and GST

PAASHA, ALAN DOVE

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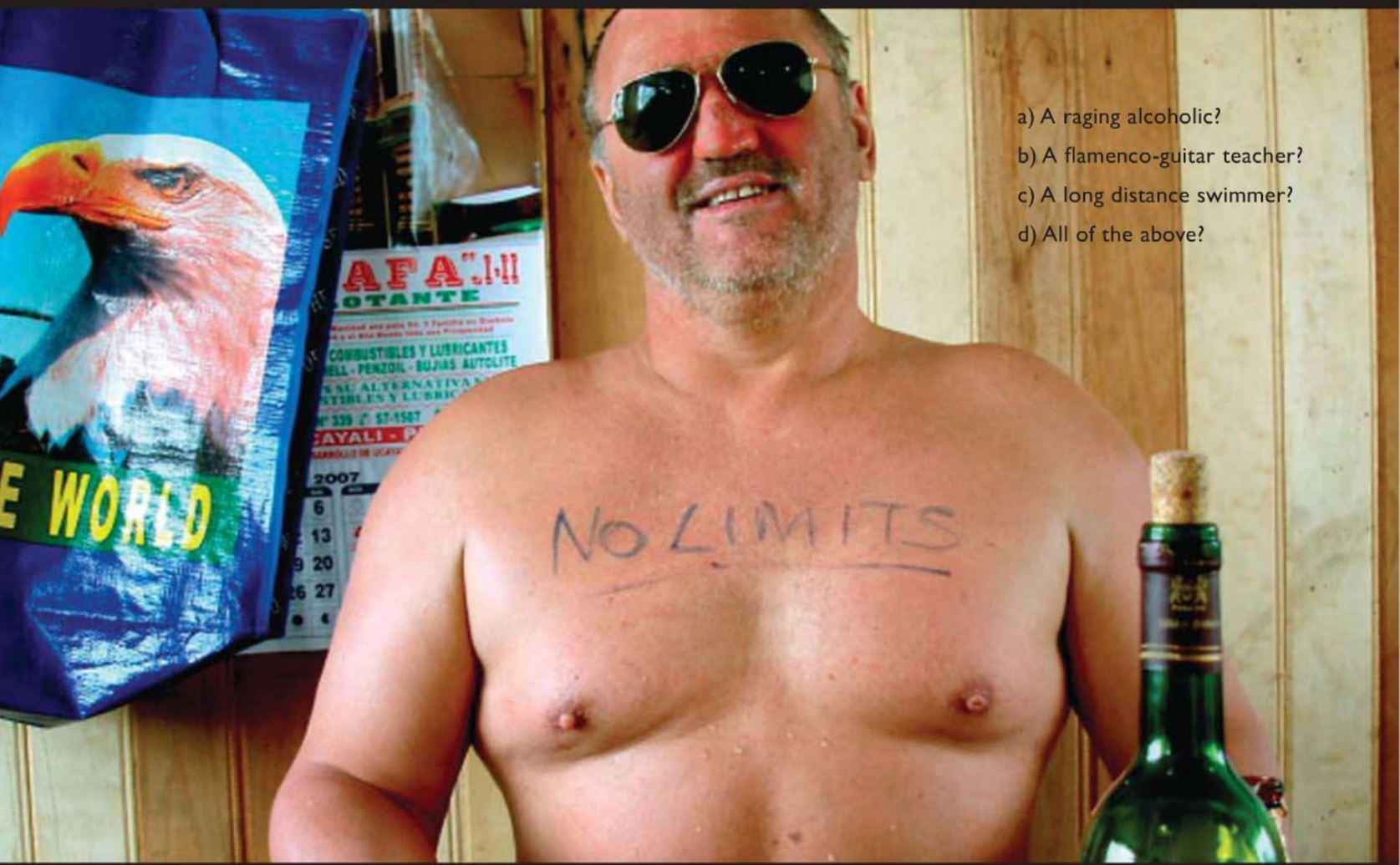

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at your request

OSTERIA DEL TORO **Friends of mine recently dined at Osteria del Toro in Wellington and were raving about the baklava. Could you persuade the restaurant to part with the recipe?**
Teejay Roach
Via email

John Allred, owner of Osteria del Toro (60 Tory St, Wellington, ph: 04-381 2299), kindly gave us this recipe for their delicious baklava.

BAKLAVA

MAKES ABOUT 20

350g caster sugar
3 tablespoons liquid honey (Osteria del Toro uses Arataki)
3 teaspoons orange-blossom water
grated zest and juice of 1 Meyer lemon
90g walnut pieces
90g pistachios
90g blanched almonds
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
80g unsalted butter, melted
1 packet filo pastry

Preheat the oven to 160°C.

Place 300g of the caster sugar with 225ml water in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce until the syrup reaches 107°C. Add the honey, orange-blossom water, and lemon zest and juice. Boil for 2 minutes then remove from the heat and cool.

Grind the nuts in a food processor until finely ground. Mix with the remaining 50g of caster sugar and the cinnamon.

Brush a small baking tray with some of the melted butter. Brush a sheet of filo pastry with melted butter, top with another sheet and repeat the process until you have used 5 sheets.

Cut the layers of sheets into 4 strips. Place around 2 tablespoons of the nut mixture near the end of each strip in the centre. Fold over the edges then roll up and place in the tray, seam side down. Repeat the process until you have used up all the nut mixture.

Bake the baklava for 30 minutes then reduce the heat to 150°C and bake for a further 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and immediately pour the cold syrup over.

Cool then refrigerate overnight. This allows the syrup to be absorbed by the pastry and nuts.

Osteria del Toro serves its baklava as a dessert with vanilla ice-cream and extra syrup drizzled over the baklava.

ONE TREE GRILL **I am sitting here trying to relive the taste of the swede soup amuse-bouche at One Tree Grill and had to email to ask for the recipe. Otherwise I will be back there very soon – it was wonderful.**
Tonya Kara
Via email

Anton Leyland, sous-chef at One Tree Grill (9 Pah Rd, Greenwoods Corner, Auckland, ph: 09-625 6407) gladly passed on the recipe.

He also comments that to make a vegetarian option omit the pancetta or bacon and replace the chicken stock with vegetable stock or water.

ROASTED SWEDE & MISO SOUP

MAKES 2 LITRES

500g swede, peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
1½ teaspoons brown sugar
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 bunch thyme
2 shallots, peeled
50g butter, diced
1 tablespoon oil
½ onion, sliced
½ leek (white part only), sliced
2 slices pancetta or rindless streaky bacon, chopped
4 cloves garlic, peeled and lightly crushed
2 star anise
1½ teaspoons black peppercorns
2 bay leaves
1 sprig rosemary
50ml white wine
25ml mirin
1½ litres chicken stock
125ml cream
1-2 tablespoons shiro (white) miso

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Put the swede in a roasting dish, sprinkle with the brown sugar, and season with salt and pepper. Chop half the thyme leaves and add to the swede along with the shallots and half the butter. Roast for 30-40 minutes until the swede is tender and golden.

In a heavy-based saucepan, heat the oil and the remaining butter. Add the onion, leek, pancetta and garlic, and sauté gently until soft.

Tie the star anise, peppercorns, bay leaves, rosemary and remaining thyme in a piece of muslin to make a bouquet garni. Add to the vegetables and allow the flavours to infuse for a few minutes.

Add the white wine and mirin, and allow to reduce for a few minutes. Add the roasted swede to the pan then pour in the chicken stock and bring to the boil. Add the cream and gently simmer for 20 minutes.

Remove and discard the bouquet garni. Add the miso to the saucepan and blend with a stick blender.

Taste and add more miso if required, according to taste. Simmer for 15 minutes then pass through a fine sieve. Serve hot.

Credit: Royal Porcelain Caron Turquoise oval plate from The Studio of Tableware. For full details, see Credits Index.

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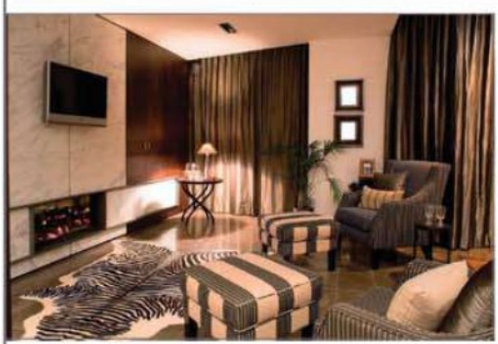

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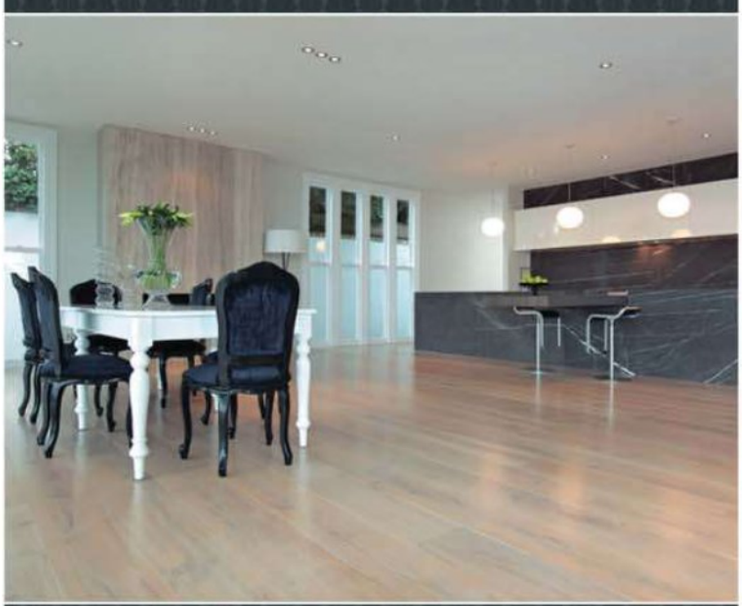

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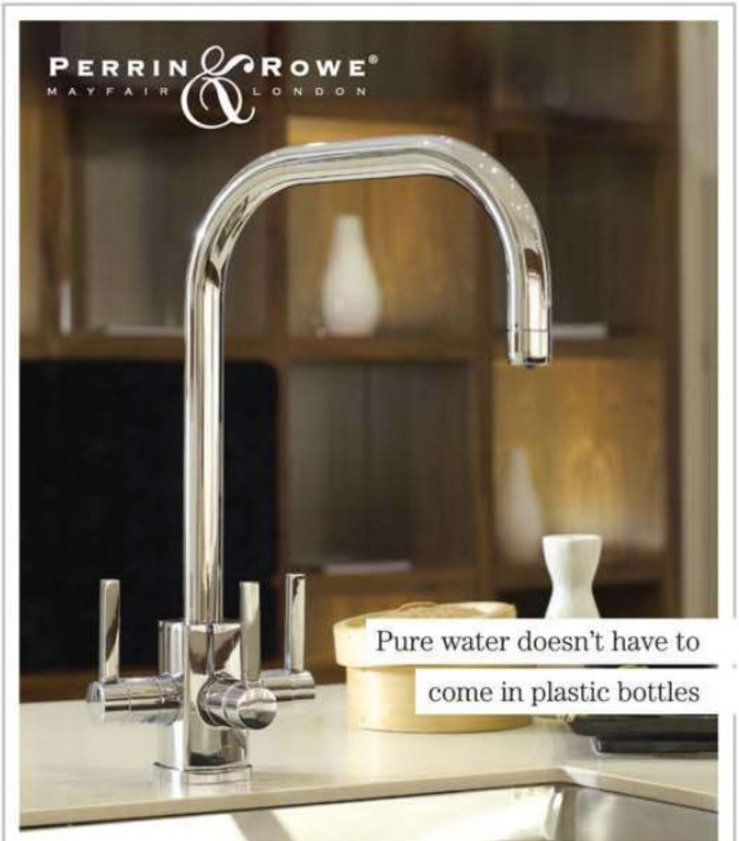

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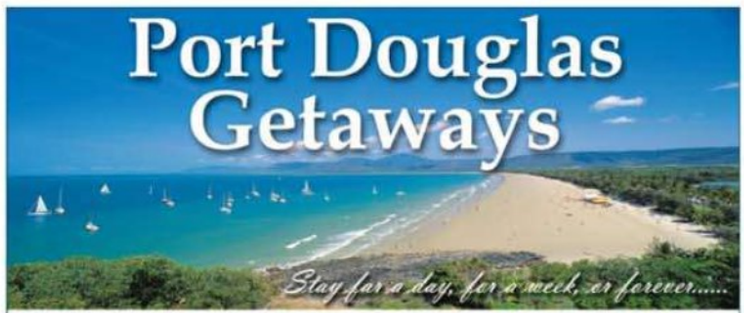

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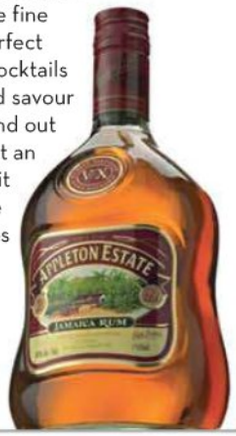

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Antique cutlery and crockery (Antiques of Epsom).

COLLOQUIAL FRENCH page 56
Iittala decanter, Royal Porcelain Adama plates, Rosenthal Jade pasta bowl and Hemstitch napkins (The Studio of Tableware); wooden table (Cranfields); tiles (Haunt Antiques); stool (Charbon); antique cutlery, marble pepper mill, silver-plated salt and pepper shakers and green glass bowl (Antiques of Epsom); background paint specially mixed by Aalto Colour.

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Serving bowl, small ceramic bowls, ceramic soup bowls and plates (Japanese Lifestyle); wooden chopping board (Cranfields); white decorative bowl and silver antique ladle (Antiques of Epsom); pewter serving dish (French Country Collections); Sophie Conran bowls, Cutipol Ebony ladle, Silk by Auerhahn and Tol by Auerhahn cutlery (The Studio of Tableware); Travertine Cross Cut Tumbled and Unfilled tile as background (Artedomus).

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Spence & Lyda Squareline walnut coffee table and amber CowHide Capelli collection by Décor Design (Spence & Lyda); Botanica hand-printed fabric (Publisher Textiles).

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Royal Porcelain Caron Turquoise oval plate (The Studio of Tableware).

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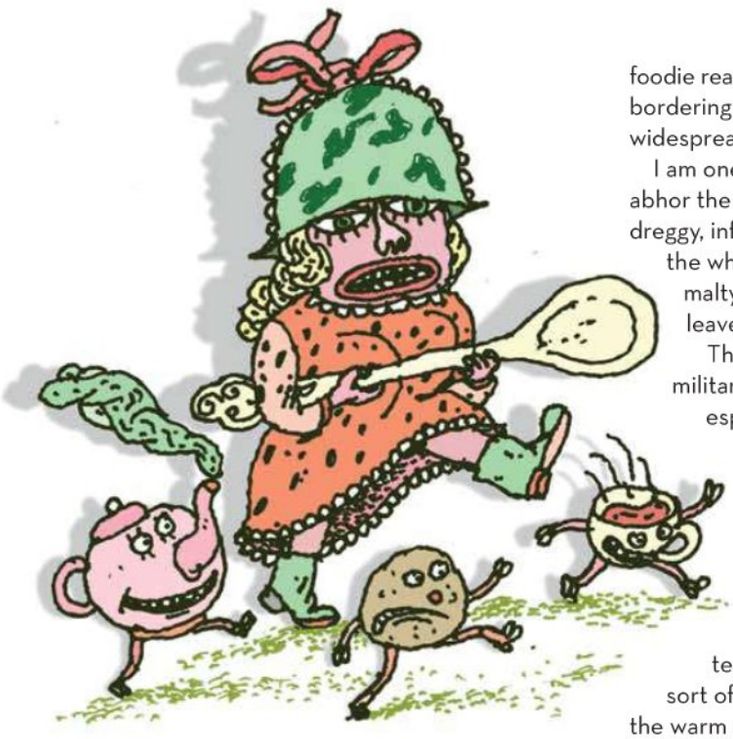
stand on tea ceremony

Jane Clifton is potty about proper tea



Of all the people I know well, I can think of only three who wouldn't describe themselves as passionate foodies. Alas, they include me. Obviously I eat food and enjoy it, but I have so little flair for or interest in preparing it that it almost feels like a disability.

I can cook. A bit. The "first sauté an onion" motif was dinned into me in childhood. And I have been through idiosyncratic foodie phases, acquiring obscure skills such as the ability to make Béarnaise sauce from scratch (we didn't know about cheating with the blender back then) and to bake various types of Italianate bread for no particular reason.

But I've never amassed the flying hours in the kitchen needed to give me confidence and judgement in the preparation of tucker.

I recently tried a couple of simple slow-cooker recipes in a desperate bid to find an idiot-proof way to cook and entertain like a civilised human being. But I made such a hash of it even my dogs hesitated to eat the results, so I am in no position to extol the romance of any particular style of cooking.

However, there is something that never fails to make my feeble inner-foodie rear up – to the point of snobbery bordering on rudeness – and that's the widespread abuse of tea.

I am one of those militants who abhor the teabag – they are filled with dreggy, inferior leaves – and insist on the whole warming-the-pot, serious-malty-flavoured-Ceylon-black-leaves palaver. Or nothing.

There are quite a few of us tea militants, and we get little respect, especially since coffee mania began. I won't knock the whole barista/Americano/crema carry-on. Coffee is a rich and ancient beverage and deserves all the attention it gets.

But I mourn the fact that tea, in contrast, has become a sort of fast-food option, rather than the warm social tradition it truly is. Hot water and a quick dunk and squeeze is not tea. Neither is anything purporting to taste of mango, strawberry, vanilla or caramel. These are pseudo-teas, which actually taste of hot water and only smell of the fanciful flavours claimed.

Hot water and a quick dunk and squeeze is not tea. Neither is anything purporting to taste of mango...

These dubious brews are travesties of what the French call tisane – a pungent and delicately flavoured beverage of fresh herbs and petals steeped in hot water. But even this is not tea.

Tea is freshly drawn water boiled up once and once only, then poured on to high-quality black tea leaves in a warmed china pot on to which must go a tea cosy (tepid tea is another infringement), and under which belongs a tray set with crockery. Not to be prissy; the crockery needn't match. And it can consist of mugs: the "builders' tea" experience. There's nothing nicer than taking a break from gardening or house painting and wrapping your hands round a mug of properly brewed tea.

But the optimal experience is tea in a beautiful teacup. Naturally, there is also a milk jug, optionally a sugar bowl, and perhaps lemon slices for the seriously aesthetic. Wait a few minutes and pour. Though this can take place in any setting, the idyll is on a wrought-iron tea table in a sunny garden, as in the opening page of Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady*: "...there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea... disposed upon the lawn..."

Still, even among us militants, there is controversy. Putting the milk in first is widely considered *déclassé*. This is the way I was brought up. And I understand there is scientific evidence the slight scalding of the milk from the tea added overhead makes a positive difference to the flavour. Some frown on bergamot, others despair of biscuit-dunking, many deplore trim milk. The truly refined regard a tea-strainer as indispensable. I prefer the homely reassurance of tea leaves in the bottom of the cup.

Some purists forgive metal teapots and eschew the tea cosy. But to me, heat loss borders on an atrocity. I even go so far as to custom-build my tea cosies, lining them with reflective material to confer an extra thermal safeguard (my mother used to use a shiny wine-cask bladder inside her cosies, but this would be beyond the pale for *Cuisine* readers).

Tea done properly is a restorative and a precious social ritual. It can be elegant and genteel, but there's also a cosy, nana-ish quality to the experience that is viscerally reassuring. Pair it with just the right biscuit or little cake and, while it's not exactly High Foodie-ism, it must be close. There's even a website, nicecupofteaandsitdown.com, dedicated to the pursuit of the perfect biscuit to have with tea. However, this only rates bought biscuits and, alas, another of my Tea Rules is, only artisan or homemade biscuits or cakes are fit to be taken with tea. There's nothing wrong with a Gingernut or Krispie, but I believe we should try to evolve beyond them. So my stifled inner-foodie lives. Perhaps there is hope for me yet.

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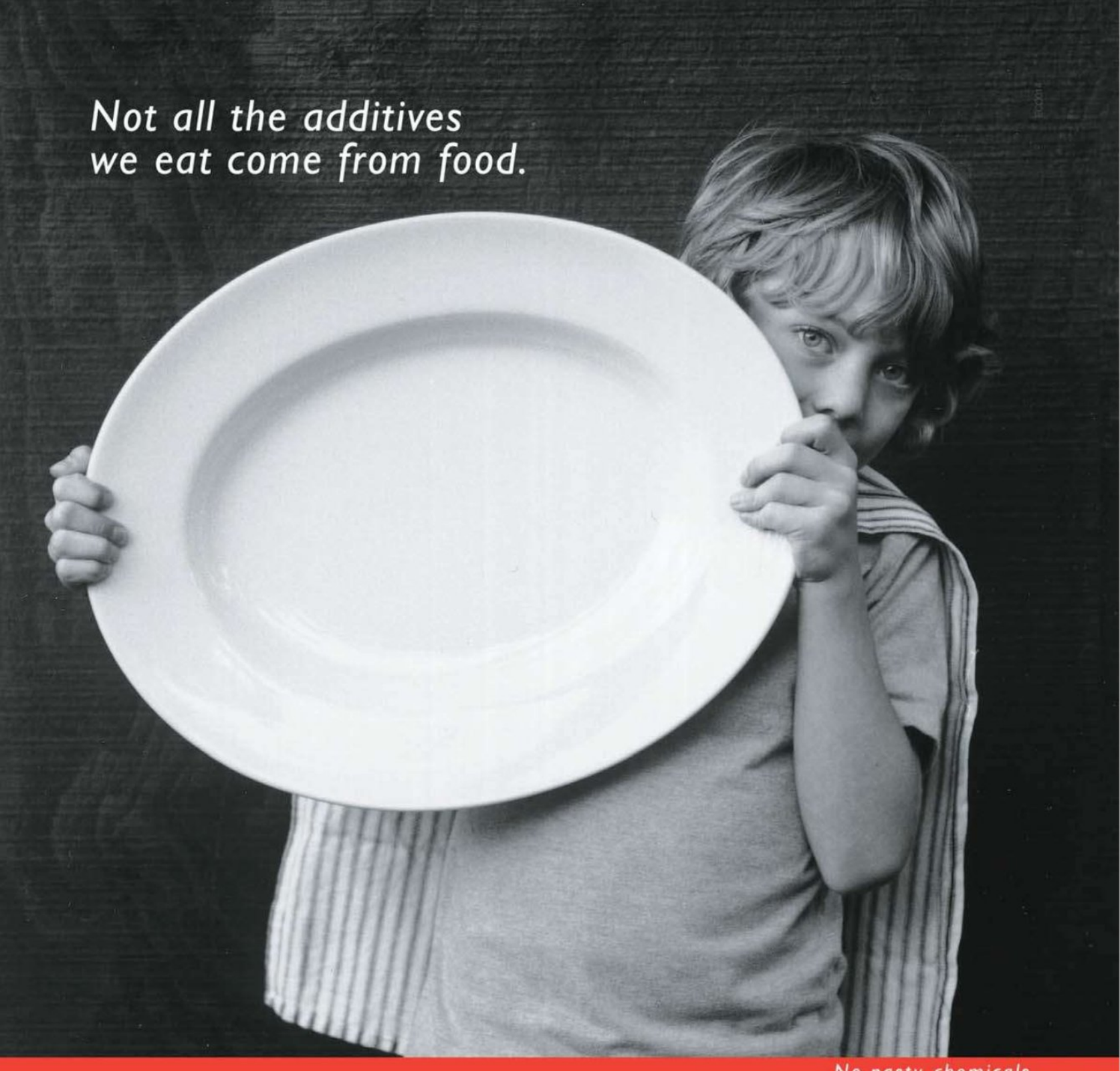

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